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HOMILIES

ON

THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS.



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*C. W. Cornutt*  
*April 1872*

# HOMILIES

ON

THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS

APPOINTED TO BE

READ IN THE HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

BY THE

REV. NICHOLAS ARMSTRONG.

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## PREFACE.

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THE following Homilies were delivered in the Church during the celebration of the service of the Holy Eucharist.

They are not detailed Expositions of the text of the Epistles and Gospels, but rather applications of the leading ideas contained therein, and were mainly intended to bring the mind and spirit of the congregation into harmony with the service in which they were engaged.

They are now published in the hope of helping to lead communicants into the consideration of the remarkable connection between the Epistles and Gospels selected by the Church from the earliest times, under the guidance of Divine wisdom, and of the fulness of instruction for the attainment of Christian perfection contained in them.

N. A.





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# HOMILIES.

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## I.

### FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

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*Ep.*—ROMANS xiii. 8. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xxv. 5.

IN the gospel of this day the Church declares her faith in the glorious earnest of His Kingdom, which was given to the Lord before His passion and death, and intimates her hope of His more glorious coming the second time, to receive not the earnest of His Kingdom to be followed by suffering, but the Kingdom itself, to be administered after resurrection from the dead, in life everlasting. At His first coming a remnant received Him, before the rulers and the nation rejected Him. The whole city heard the joyful acclamations of those who shouted Hosanna to Him that came in the name of the Lord, Whose presence assured them of peace in Heaven and glory in the highest. The city was shaken by the voice of thanksgiving, and compelled for a moment to think of and enquire concerning Him who was the object of it. The Temple of God feels for a little while the presence and power and goodness of Him who casts out of it the profane and covetous, and vindicates its honour as the place where God should be worshipped and prayer offered for all people, and who in the midst of it receives the blind and the lame, giving them sight that they might know their way, and strength that they might walk in it. He drives from the Temple those who seek in it their worldly gain. He meets and blesses there those who are

seeking deliverances which God alone can bestow. If the Jewish city and Temple witnessed the honour which was put upon Him by God before His crucifixion by which He won His Kingdom, shall not the Christian Church, wherein is the city and the Temple in a higher sense, witness also demonstrations adapted to her circumstances, in honour and praise of Him who cometh to receive at God's hands the travail of His soul, the reward of all His toils and sufferings? Shall not a remnant be found before His second advent to glory, as before His first entrance upon suffering, to welcome Him in the name of God and to sound forth His praise? The last sign before His sufferings was His glorious reception into the rebellious city. The last sign in the Christian Church will be the preaching of the Gospel of His Kingdom and the recovery by an election of the earnest of it. When those signs which marked the commencement of the Christian dispensation shall be made to reappear at its close, then are the godly exhorted to lift up their heads and to rejoice because their redemption draweth nigh.

But whilst the gospel animates the Church with the hope of the Advent and Kingdom of the Lord, the epistle preserves in the sobriety of dutifulness and subordination to the powers that exist in the world, until that Kingdom appear, all who have drunk into the glorious hope. Those who hope for the Kingdom honour every earnest and prefiguration of it by which it is preceded. The right attitude in which to expect what God is about to establish is that of supporting and honouring and enjoying what He has already established. The epistle for the day is part of the context which treats of the duty of Christians towards the powers that be which are ordained of God. After enjoining obedience to those in the providence of God set over us, the apostle lays down the two principles out of which would surely flow all that he demands: the principle of love, which is the fulfilling of law, which works no ill

to any man, but all good to all men; and the principle of hope, which lays hold of the Kingdom of God soon to be revealed, and attains to deliverance from over anxiety about the kingdoms which at present exist. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." Do not grudge against those who have required you to discharge your obligations towards them. Do not hate the king because you have been obliged to pay him your taxes, but on the contrary, when you have discharged all lawful demands that are due from you, retain behind feelings of love towards those to whom you have discharged them, and not feelings of spite and of vexation. When all other debts are paid remember that one remains which you are to be ever paying, and shall have never paid as worthy followers of Jesus Christ, who loved us and whose love is beyond all comprehension. Owe no man anything, but rather love all men. Not paying debts is an evidence of the want of love. Pay your debts out of love, not because of law or force constraining. The complement of law is not so much power in the executive to force obedience, as love in the subjects which makes obedience easy. The power of the ruler is the provision in reserve for the punishment of those who refuse to yield the complement which the law requires. Where that complement is freely yielded no room is left for the exercise of the power of the lawgiver in punishment, but all facilities are afforded for the exercise of his power in rewarding. The Christian is the most loyal subject of earthly government. He loves his rulers because they are men; he reverences them because they are God's servants. To love, as the first motive power to obedience, the apostle adds, "And that, knowing the time," &c. "And that." To what I have said add this consideration also, "our salvation is nearer than when we believed." You know this, and that therefore it is high time to awake out of sleep. Political strife like fleshly indulgence brings sleep upon the soul—it causes oblivion

of the Kingdom of *God*, of our glorious destiny and mission and work, The nearer the salvation the more entirely awake the Church should be. The salvation of the body of Christ is nearer now than when the first members of it believed and were engrafted into their Head. Paul lays down as an axiom that the nearer the advent of the Lord the more intense for it should be the desire of the Church. The mark of those who awake is twofold, the putting away of the works of darkness, the putting on of the armour of light. The putting on of suitable apparel is preparatory and pre-requisite to walking honestly. We must put on the armour of light that we may walk consistently with our calling and hope. The principal causes of insubordination to government are the irregularities of our own minds, affections, and appetites. Men not knowing how to enforce obedience at home in their innermost chamber, within their own breasts, will not know how to yield it abroad in the family, the Church, or the kingdom. He who will not rule himself will not brook the rule of any other whom God has set over him. He who will be ruled by his appetites and lusts and tempers, will also be ruled by those without him whom he is not bound to obey. God would teach every man the science of government first in his own person. If we refuse the first lesson we never learn aright those which follow. Those, then, who are hoping to see Christ coming in His Kingdom must go forth to meet Him in suitable apparel. The garments to be worn are thus defined: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the "armour of light," these are the vestments of glory and of beauty—the garments of salvation, the godly order implied in the name Lord, the purity implied in the name Jesus, the power and manifold endowment implied in the name Christ. Thus should it be seen that His real presence is in the Church, to whom He hath given to contain His mysteries, to eat His flesh and to drink His blood. St.



Paul contemplates the Church entering into the Kingdom of God thus invested. In these days, when the suitable vestments to be worn by priests worshipping God are become matters of keen and angry disputation, the deliverance for all from strife and heartburning is the real putting on of this "wedding garment," this covering of God's Spirit, this actual and entire sanctification by virtue of union with Him who is Holy, the example of holiness in Himself, the producer of it in others. It is not enough to have the sign of Christ's cross upon our persons, we must be clothed with Christ Himself, not only in the way of forensic justification, but also in the way of true righteousness, full regeneration of our whole being. May God so prepare His Church for His Kingdom, and give speedily to those who are prepared the inheritance whereunto they are sealed in Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

## II.

### SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

---

*Ep.*—ROM. xv. 4. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xxi. 25.

THE gospel of last Lord's-day presented to us the triumphant entrance of the Lord into His holy city. That entrance, followed by His sufferings and death, typified His glorious advent, with which no sorrow shall be connected, but "joy unspeakable," rest, and peace never to be broken. The first scripture read in the Holy Communion of this day is addressed to the healing of division in the Church of God, in order that all might with one accord united and unhindered press into the common hope.

The first division in the Christian Church was into Jews and Gentiles. They were shunning and distrusting one another. The apostle rebuked this spirit, and said to them, "Receive ye one another as Christ received us to the glory of God." Christ has received us both, let us receive one another. God will be glorified in both, therefore let each glory in the other. Christ became the minister of circumcision in the interests of both parties. He put Himself under the yoke of the law for the benefit of both. He obeyed God as man's representative. He suffered the penalty of God's broken law as man's substitute. He magnified God's truthfulness unto the Jew, fulfilling in His life and death, by His resurrection and kingdom, all the promises which were "made unto the fathers." He brought God's mercy unto the Gentiles, who had been "strangers from the covenant of promise," who had "no hope," and were "without God in the world." In order to unite Jews and Gentiles the apostle recited the promises of Holy Scripture, in which both found a place. The true David, the King of Israel, speaks of Himself in the

18th Psalm as being "made the Head of the Heathen," and as being delivered from all His enemies, and from all His afflictions, that He might be able to say, "For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles and will sing unto Thy name." The last word of the song of Moses, recorded in the 32nd of Deuteronomy, unites the chosen nation and all nations in one song of praise, "Rejoice ye Gentiles with His people." Again, the 117th Psalm is quoted, where the truth confirmed to the Jew and the mercy shewn unto the Gentile are brought together. "O praise the Lord all ye nations; praise Him all ye people, for His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord." From the law and from the psalms the apostle passes to the prophets, reciting what is written in the 11th chapter of the book of Isaiah, "There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles trust." Here are the faithful promises of God contained in His Scriptures of truth. The fulfilment of these promises shall bring consummation of happiness to Jew and Gentile together. The fulfilment of these promises is your common hope. The God of hope, the author of the hope, whose word of truth records it, give you to believe what He has spoken to you, that believing what He has promised you may be filled with "joy and peace," and out of present joy and peace may abound unto hope of a greater joy and a deeper and more undisturbed peace, where not the promise only shall be in your mind and in your heart, but the thing promised shall be within you and around you to be looked upon and rejoiced in for ever and ever. The God of hope cause you to abound in the hope which He has set before you, that abounding in it you may be fitted and enabled to receive every seal and earnest of it which by the power of the Holy Ghost you can experience, "that ye may abound in hope and also in the power of the Holy Ghost." That which would have healed the divisions in the beginning of the Church can alone heal them in the end. It was needed in the beginning when the

rent was narrower, it is sufficient now when the chasm is opened to its greatest width. All that is necessary is that that which was written aforetime might be now believed, that the hope might be embraced which the Scriptures teach us to wait for and comfort us while waiting for it. The God of patience and consolation, He who gave us the promise to wait for, and the consolation while waiting, is He who "grants us to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." By the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, our common hope, God seeks to re-unite the heirs of His Kingdom, whom their own partial knowledge and the fraud and malice of their enemies have separated for a season. "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Ye were called, as God called Abraham, the father of the faithful, to come forth unto a land which He would shew unto him and give him; so hath He called every one of us to come forth from the present world which lieth in wickedness, and wait for the world to come wherein dwelleth righteousness. They who obey the call from Heaven are sealed as one body unto the possession in due time of the hope whereunto they were called, and as one body receive the earnest and firstfruits of their inheritance in the gift of the Holy Ghost. The hope which brought together the members of the one body in the beginning can heal the dislocation by which they are kept apart from one another in the time of the end. The Lord give the word and raise up the mighty company which shall publish it! Hath He not said it, "the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all nations, then shall the end come?" "But have not the nations heard? Yea, verily, their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the end of the world." In the epistle of the day the Scriptures are magnified as the record of the promises by which patience and comfort are wrought into the heart of the Church as the depository of the hope which God calls His own, and by which He administers peace

and joy and the power of the Holy Ghost unto His faithful people. In the gospel of the day we learn how great shall be the need of the hope which disappoints not in the last times. Christ calls upon His disciples to hope, when despair shall have seized upon the world. In the day when "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars," in all the heavenly bodies; when upon the earth shall be distress of nations, such distress as contains in it very anguish, and in that anguish perplexity, the wisest confounded, no man knowing which way to turn, what measure to adopt, what course to pursue; when the sea shall be troubled as the earth, when men shall be unable to live through the storm, when fainting and fear shall be everywhere, when the powers of Heaven shall have been shaken, He who establishes the Kingdom of Heaven, which cannot be shaken, shall assure the hearts of those who trust in Him, who abide in Him, and who suffer His word to abide in them. "Heaven and earth shall pass away; His words shall not pass away." When the signs of the speedy passing away of the heavens and of the earth shall most abound, then shall the promises contained in His word come into remembrance. A remnant through patience and consolation of the Scriptures shall have hope. In every department of life there shall be a witness for God that He has not forgotten those in covenant with Him, who remember His covenant, and seek unto Him for the blessings contained in it.

Men will know that redemption draweth nigh, as they know that summer approacheth by the breaking forth of life in the fig-tree, and in *all* the trees. The same day, which is a day of distress and anguish and perplexity of fear because of things present, and of greater fear because of things apprehended, will be to those who believe in God's promise and yield to His grace a day of looking-up and of lifting up of the head to behold and hail a coming redemption, a deliverance entire and for ever. Amen.

### III.

#### THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

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*Ep.*—I COR. iv. 1. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. ii. 2.

THE gospel contains a warning against being offended with Christ personal, the epistle against being offended with Christ's way in His Church. Even to John the Baptist Jesus sent the dividing message: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." The man who had heralded Him unto Israel, who had baptized Him, and seen the Holy Ghost descend upon Him after his baptism, who had heard God proclaim Him: "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," who bare record himself that this is the Son of God, even he was in danger of not understanding unto the end Him whom he had so well known in the beginning. It is remarkable that Christ did not throw John back upon the wonderful circumstances in John's own history which prepared him to be the forerunner of the Saviour, nor upon the events connected with the commencement of Christ's ministry, in which John himself had so much to do. To save John's feet from slipping He referred him to the words of the Prophets, to the declarations of Holy Scripture made concerning Messiah, and to the work corresponding with these declarations which Messiah was then doing. He seemed to say to the forerunner, Even you who have heard the voice of God proclaiming His Son; who have yourself announced the Son as the baptizer with the Holy Ghost, and have seen the Holy Ghost descend upon Him; even you must be assured concerning Him, not by the wonderful things which you have yourself experienced and witnessed, but by the things which are written in the Scriptures of Truth. When He would save

His disciples from forsaking their hope, He recalled not to their memories the countless miracles which they had seen wrought by His hands, but he opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures. And so he dealt with John the Baptist, expounding unto him from Holy Scripture the things concerning Himself.

Those who have witnessed the most wonderful works of Christ, and fulfilled the highest ministries in His service, are in danger of being offended with Him, as some part of His work and office is developed; and they need to be continually taught by Him, that they may not forsake Him before all His work is done. Even to them he said, "Remember Lot's wife;" also "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Those who in our own days understood Christ, when through His members he cried unto God for Apostles, did not understand Him when He began to bring forth the Apostolic Ministry. Those who have understood Him in some measure and rejoiced in His work as He raised up Apostles, may not equally understand and justify Him when He adds to Apostles His other Ministries. If it was needful to say to the herald of His first advent, "Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me," shall it not be needed by the heralds of His second advent also? If we love ourselves and our part in God's work inordinately, we shall lose our interest in that work when it begins to stretch beyond us, and to leave us comparatively aside, that it may bring forth and employ other instrumentalities also, in which God also is to be seen and honoured. And John was no monopolist, neither was he tempted to envy by those who said to him, "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptizeth and all men come unto Him." He was able to reply unto them, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Yet even he, whose spirit was so humble, and whose answer was so wise, needed to hear as the Lord's work proceeded, "Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me." The Lord who pitied His servant and sent unto him

in his prison the word in season, the word of light and deliverance, will scatter the darkness of those who trust in Him and in their great trouble seek unto Him for help. John did not try to wrestle down his doubts in proud self-confidence, he confided them to Him who knew how to remove them, who condemneth no man for his sins and weaknesses, but for his folly and wickedness in attempting to do battle in his own strength with such terrible enemies. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me," blessed are they who accept Christ as God has given Him, and seek not to make Him over again, as a Christ after their own taste, in their own image, who say not unto Him in an impious sense what He saith to them in the truth of God, Before your claims can be allowed by us "you must be born again;" you cannot as you are be approved by our judgment or receive possession of our hearts. The epistle for the day shows how the work against which Jesus warned John the Baptist began to be wrought in the Christian Church. Christ did not give more offence to the Jews while He was upon the earth than He hath been giving to the Christians ever since His ascension to the right hand of God. They soon began to think very lightly of His ways of blessing them, and to account themselves perfectly happy without them. "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us," was the language of those whom Christ sent to those to whom He sent them. Christ sent us that you might be full, that you might be fed from the table of God; but you say you do not want us to feed you, you have fed to the full without us. God made us stewards of His mysteries, but you have passed by His stewards, you have treated them with contempt, and yet you have got possession of the mysteries; the long hidden and now revealed provisions of God for the supply of all your wants you have got into the full enjoyment of without the help of those to whom Christ gave the key of the storehouses, whom He hath appointed to dispense the food.

Christ sent us to enrich you, to give unto you the Spirit by



which you know that all things are yours ; yea, that you are Christ's, and that Christ is God's. But lo ! you are rich already without our help. He sent us to give you the earnest of your kingdom, but you are even now in possession of the kingdom itself, and that without us. Christ said we were necessary to help you to these results ; you say, Christ was mistaken, we have obtained them all without you, or if in some way you were employed in bringing them to us we hold them without you. Here we are full as God's guests, rich as His heirs, crowned as His kings, all without you. Of what use are you to us, when all that we need to be, all that can satisfy our highest aspirations, we are and have without you ?

Would to God you were indeed where you are in imagination, then would we be with you ! You may attain to a fools' paradise without us, but into the Kingdom of God you cannot enter if you undervalue the help which He who hath opened that Kingdom unto all believers sends to lead you into it.

How remarkable is the sequence in the portions of Holy Scripture employed in the Communion during these four Advent Sundays. The first calls upon the Church to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and so to go forth and meet Him, clothed with Himself in the Spirit, to be able to hear the glory of His coming in the power and Kingdom of God. The second magnifies the first of the means by which the Church attains to the condition of being clothed upon with her Head in the Heavens, even with the covering of His Spirit. It commends to us the things which were written for our learning, which were to perfect our patience and fill us with hope. It magnifies the written word of God. The third commends the ministries by the action of which that which hath been written is made plain to the Church, and believers are perfected in the ways of the Lord. And the last calls upon the Church so clothed with Christ, so instructed out of His Scriptures, so furnished with His ministries, to rejoice in the Lord, yea, without interruption to rejoice. If we will not be offended with Himself, but desire to be clothed with Him, if

we will search His Scriptures and be taught in them, if we will receive His ministries and be led forward by them, then shall we rejoice in His coming with joy unspeakable. We shall enter His Kingdom with songs of thanksgiving. We shall behold His face with confidence when we have received the messengers which He sent before His face to prepare His way before Him. May God in His great mercy grant unto unto us this wisdom on our way and this blessedness at the end of it! Amen.

## IV.

### FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

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*Ep.*—PHIL. iv. 4. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN i. 19.

THE Pharisees would make John the Baptist speak about himself. He said as little as he could about himself. He did not use the language concerning his ministry with which he was furnished from Malachi, the last of the prophets, from the angel who announced his birth, and from the inspired utterances given to his father Zechariah, when his mouth was miraculously opened on the recovery of his faith. He bore the least testimony possible concerning himself, fixing the attention of all upon Him that was coming after him, and calling upon all to understand their true position and duty. I am but the voice of one shouting in a desert. Be not too much taken up with the voice, but consider what it utters. The voice cries, Make straight the way of the Lord. Prepare for Him who is coming. Give liberty to those whom He has sent before Him to deliver their message, and to do their work. He has sent before Him the law and the prophets; the law to bear witness that God demands of men perfect obedience, and full expiation when perfect obedience has failed. The law demands a lamb without blemish and without spot, and that that lamb, without blemish and without spot, should die for sins not its own. The law is moral and typical; as it is moral it proclaims the guilt of all mankind; as it is ceremonial or typical it points to the perfect sacrifice, to the Lamb of God who should take away the sin of the world.

Make a right use of the law, that you may thereby be in a right state of mind to look upon Him that is coming, that

you may be humble and penitent as those ought to be whom the moral law has weighed in the balance and has found wanting, that you may be delivered from despair and filled with holy confidence, through the sprinkling of the blood of the true Lamb, even of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, slain from the beginning in the purpose of God, prefiguratively slain in all the sacrifices, and to be actually slain when the fullness of time should come. The law did not make straight the way of the Lord because of the unbelief and ignorance of those to whom the law was given. The prophets also testified of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that should follow. They to whom the testimony was borne understood not its meaning. They could not receive all that was said and each part of it in its proper order. Joshua, David, and Solomon left to the people the land of promise; Moses had taught them the work that should occupy them in that land; the prophets proclaimed the meaning and end of all. The Baptist found the people as if in a wilderness again. He did not say to them, Meet your Saviour in the land which He gave to you of old, presenting to Him, fully understood and blamelessly kept, the holy services which in that land were to be performed; but he said, You have wandered from your place and misunderstood your work, "make straight in the desert a highway for your God." The people who were appointed to welcome Messiah at His first coming did not hold fast all which He sent unto them and set up in the midst of them, to prepare the way before Him. Therefore they knew Him not; they cried, "Away with him!" "Spare Barabbas, crucify Jesus." The epistle of the day shews us how the Christian Church should be preserved from following the evil example of those who had preceded it.

The apostle said to the Christian Church, "Rejoice in the Lord." He had said before, "Stand fast in the Lord." So stand fast. So as I have set you an example. "I have accounted all things but loss for the excellency of the know-

ledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Let it be so with you. Stand fast in the Lord; keep the place given to you in Him under Him. Let Him be your head, your teacher, your ruler, your perfecter for ever. Those who read these words of Paul understood well what he meant. He spoke to men who were being tempted by seducing teachers to seek to cleanse themselves from sins by practising obsolete rites, who were promised the attainment of true humility and reverence in the worshipping of angels, who were being allured into the schools of philosophy falsely so called, for lessons of wisdom fuller and more profound than the anointing in the Church could give them. To such tried and tempted ones the Apostle said, Be not moved from your steadfastness; all that God wants you to be *that* Lord can make you under whom God has placed you; be organised by Him, be endowed by Him, be enabled by Him, be kept by Him; the whole result shall follow. God shall rejoice in you as the true "circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, which rejoice in Christ Jesus, and which have no confidence in the flesh." Stand fast in the Lord, yea rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice that you have such an one to help you; avail yourselves gladly of His help: esteem highly that help by whomsoever brought; accept no *man's* person, but ever cry out from the heart, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." To be standing fast in the Lord, to be rejoicing in the Lord, is the attitude and mood of reasonable hope. It is the attitude of those who are thankful for the preparation for God's kingdom, and who are lawfully desiring at God's hand that for which God's hand is making them fit. We instinctively desire what we are fitted for. He who is coming is He who hath already come. He was, and is, and is to come. The true Church rejoices to hold up to God the testimony and the memorial of what He was in the day when He loved us and gave Himself for us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. The true Church desires to give Him liberty to manifest what He is, to bestow the

Holy Ghost according to the will of God, to give by the Holy Ghost regeneration and anointing, to build up the Church in His likeness, to make it His body, and as His body the blessing from God in the midst of His creatures, the salt of the earth, the light of the world. The true Church longs to behold Him in the day of His glory, when the kingdom shall be given unto Him, and He shall reign till all His enemies be put under His feet. Blessed are they who follow the Lamb to the cross, to the throne in Heaven, and to the everlasting kingdom for which all creation waits. The first word of the epistle is "Rejoice in the Lord." This is followed by the exhortation, Let "your moderation be known unto all men," your moderation, *i.e.* your gentleness. Your joy in the Lord must not make you oppressive and overbearing in your carriage towards men. Those who regard themselves as in the especial favour of Heaven are in danger of becoming ungente and overbearing. There must be no fanatical fierceness in the Church of God, which is the bride of the Lamb, which is the dwelling-place of the Dove. Let your gentleness be known unto all; be not overquick to maintain your own cause, to avenge yourselves. The Lord is near; He in whom you rejoice is near unto you; He will undertake for you, and to Him belongeth all power in Heaven and on earth; and not only is the Lord near unto you, but you have access to the throne of God the Father in Heaven. To those who avail themselves of that access peace is given. We are exhorted not to harbour cares and anxieties, but to ask help of God, not in a complaining spirit, but in that hopeful spirit which mingles thanksgiving with the supplication. Those who pray shall be saved from the care which tortures, whether the mind or the heart be the point assailed. The peace of God shall guard the mind and the heart; the mind from everything which perplexes, which bewilders, which deludes; the heart from the things which defile, and trouble, and terrify. God's peace shall guard as a sentinel on his post the mind and heart of the Church, which

appears before Him continually with supplication, and prayer, and thanksgiving. When the Church has prayed, the last act of Divine service is to consign those who have prayed to the peace of God. When the last prayer has been offered, "the peace which passeth understanding" assumes its charge, and nothing for ever, from that time forth, disturbs the mind, and blessed is the man who dies in the peace of God; blessed are they who are found in peace before their translation to the Lord, after praying the last prayer which the Church, waiting for its translation, ought to pray. Amen.

## V.

### FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

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EP.—Phil. iv. 4. GOSP.—St. John i. 19.

IN the gospel for this day is related the account of himself which was given by the forerunner of our Lord at His first appearing. A deputation of Priests and Levites was sent from Jerusalem to question him, and here we have his answer.

He says not all that could be said concerning his ministry, he withholds from those who were not prepared to receive aught, a full testimony, or any favourable testimony at all. He will not allow himself to be called Elias, although the Lord instructed His disciples that in a certain sense John was indeed the Elias who was to come. He refuses even to be called a prophet, and yet Jesus said that he was a prophet, and much more than a prophet, and it was said of him in the Holy Ghost by his father Zecharias at the time of his circumcision, "Thou child shalt be called the prophet of the Highest." In his account of himself he limits his answer to one passage of Holy Scripture, contained in the book of the prophet Isaiah, where the forerunner is spoken of, as going before Him who should "comfort Israel; who should feed His flock like a shepherd, carrying the lambs in His arms and gently leading those with young." John does not notice the facts concerning himself which his history furnishes, that he was the son by a miracle of a barren and aged mother, that he had drunk neither wine nor strong drink, that he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, that his father had been miraculously dealt with as concerning him, having been struck with dumbness for not believing the promise concerning his miraculous



birth, and having his dumbness taken away and speech in the power of the Spirit of God bestowed upon him when his faith revived, and he accepted the gift which God bestowed upon him. All these things, and all such things, John makes no mention of.

But he fixes the eyes of Priests and Levites on the Scriptures of truth, on the Scriptures which they themselves acknowledged. He would enlarge and assure their hearts by God's promises of grace unto themselves, and he would establish their confidence in himself, not by any wonders which concerning himself he could record, but by showing them that he was doing a work which Scripture predicted should be done. On what he was doing, not on himself, he strove to fix their attention. Rather he would impress upon them what they should themselves be doing : Whatever else you may think concerning me, know this assuredly, that I am come to show you your present duty, which is to make way for Him that is coming, to be ready to receive Him, to give Him all the facilities in your power for doing the work which He comes into the midst of you to accomplish ; know your need of what He has to do, and as those most deeply interested in His work, bid Him Godspeed in it, yield unto Him your hearts' confidence, render unto Him willing service, be ready to hear and to follow Him. He was the voice to awaken them ; they were the men by whom the work should be done, the work of preparing a way for the Lord, or of taking up arms against Him. In the prophecy by Malachi the greatness and dignity of *the forerunner* are more set forth ; in the prophecy of Isaiah, which John the Baptist quotes, the workman is lost in the *glory* and magnitude of *the work* in which he is engaged ; in fact, he is not even spoken of as a person, but as a voice lifted up in a wilderness, nothing worth in himself, but worth everything in the testimony which he bears ; himself a voice, but that voice the bringer together of Israel and Christ, heralding the King, gathering His faithful subjects.

The answer of John the Baptist to the Priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem to examine into the grounds of his ministry is an example for the guidance of those who are engaged in a work similar to his before the second advent of the Lord. They must, as well as he, strengthen men in the Scriptural ground of what they are doing ; they are to imitate his modesty in speaking of himself—his clearness, and fullness, and boldness in speaking of the work which the Lord had undertaken to perform by his hands, and to call others to a participation in, by his testimony.

Before the second advent of the Lord, His way must be prepared by the ministers which He appointed to go before Him, and to set up on the earth the model and the earnest of His Kingdom. The first precursor occupied the highest office in the dispensation under which he acted. The analogous work of preparation before the second advent must engage the highest offices which belong to the dispensation of the Spirit. The highest ministry of the Jewish Church, extraordinarily raised up, prepared the way before the Lord at the first ; the highest ministry of the Christian Church, extraordinarily revived, must be employed in the second and last preparation. The analogy of Scripture furnishes the ground for the re-appearing of the long-lost ministries, the evidence of their having appeared is a people prepared for the advent of the Lord. So the epistle for this week aptly corresponds with the gospel. It sets forth the preparation for the coming of Christ which the Holy Ghost operates in the Church by the ordinances which afford Him liberty of action. By their fruits ye shall know them. The fruit of true apostles is a people rejoicing in the Lord, and from that high and satisfying joy deriving moderation of feeling towards everything else,—but by that joy in the unseen Lord now experienced excited greatly to desire His personal manifestation,—a people living a life of holy worship, of “prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving,” (which are not formal and unmeaning, but the means by which “requests

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are made known unto God," the faithful rendering out to Him of honest hearts and their lawful desires), escaping by such communion with God from rending and distracting care, and entering through it as by a door opened in Heaven, into the "peace of God which passeth all understanding." After the Church has performed her worship this benediction of peace is pronounced, and when the worship has been true the peace is real and abiding, and by it hearts and minds are guarded from defilement and darkness, through Jesus Christ. Such a work attests workmen from God. Amen.

## VI.

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

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EP.—Hebrews i. 1. GOSP.—St. John i. 1.

ON this day, when in the Church is commemorated the birth into this world of our Lord Jesus Christ, the portions of Holy Scripture appropriated to the Communion Service sum up as it were the revelation of God concerning “His unspeakable gift” in His relation to God and to the universe, His glory *from eternity*, His glory *to eternity*, and the *time-step* which was His transition from one to the other. His eternal condition is briefly but comprehensively set forth in the epistle under the name of the “Son.” He existed as the Son before the worlds were made, as the Son He made the worlds, and as every son bears the likeness of his parent, so was He before the worlds were made, “the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His person.” Of all the glory that was in God, all the brightness was in Him; of all the power to impress, that was in God, all the impression was in Him; He was the brightness of God’s glory, the express image of His person—in the language of almost Scriptural awfulness, which the Creed puts into our mouth, “God of God, very God of very God”—the Son who was “about His Father’s business” when creation was to be produced, as well as when creation was to be redeemed. For being the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His person, He is revealed unto us as “upholding all things by the word of God’s power,” literally *bearing* all things, bringing them forth from nothing into being, bearing them out of the way to reproduce them under other forms and higher laws; bearing them up before God for His blessing and for His

service, carrying them and sustaining them through all God's appointed dispensations to their destined end, their glorious consummation ; doing all this by the word of God's power, God's *ability* more literally, accomplishing His work by speaking words which have in them God's *ability*, upon which God's almightiness doth wait to make them fact. The voice of the Son of God was heard once, and creation came forth into existence. His voice shall be heard again, and all that are in their graves shall hear it ; the heavens and the earth that now are shall pass away, and the new heavens and the new earth shall appear.

Well, this Son of God, this heir of all things, this creator of all worlds, this perfect image of God, this utterer and accomplisher of God's will and purpose, did by Himself purge our sins ; Himself, in His own person, without our help and without our participation. He accomplished the purification of our sins, the cleansing of them away, the atonement for them. Here was His central point between two eternities. The purging of our sins was His door of return to God for the glory which he had with God before the world was, and with the superadded glory of bringing back with Him a creation made partaker of the stability of God, carried through all its changes to the perfect condition wherein it never should know change any more.

Because He purged our sins, therefore does he rule angels (the eldest born and strongest of the creatures of God) in our nature, in which He loved righteousness and hated wickedness, in which He met with wickedness, and could not, by all its allurements and false beauty, be persuaded to love it or prevented from hating it. Because as man he loved righteousness, as man He experienced the joy of God which the anointing with the oil of gladness could inspire ; as man, as God in man's nature, He rules the angels, who as messengers are swift as the wind, as public servants have the energy of flames of fire. How swift on God's errands, how ardent in His work, speed in their embassy, fire in their liturgy !

Oh ! that the Church might so go forth to God's work, might so perform it, following Him who said, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished?" Alas ! without the spirit of Christ how slow paced are the feet of the Church which go forth on missions, how flat and dull and cold the public service, the liturgy, the solemn eucharist ! In the gospel the eternal condition of the Lord is expressed, not by the term Son, but by the name of the Word, who before all worlds, in the beginning, was with God and was God, expressing God as word expresses thought. "The brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person," as the epistle saith. The epistle ascribes the work of creation unto Him as the Son ; the gospel attributes it unto Him as the Word. He who made the worlds is the Son ; He who made all things is the Word : therefore the Son and the Word are one. "In Him was life ;" all life which is in God is also in Him ; whatsoever life has proceeded from God has also proceeded from Him. Not only did He make the worlds, but He contained in Him the life out of which all things sprang, which planned all things, assigns them places severally, explains their end and use, the light in which all things are understood. And He who was eternally with God as His Son, His Word, He who made the worlds, He in whom was life, even the eternal life, He became man for our salvation. The Son from eternity of God became in time Son of Man, was born of a woman, was begotten of God from the grave, was declared by resurrection to be the Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of Holiness, and was received back into Heaven as the Son of God still, but not the Son of God only as He left Heaven in the singleness of the Divine Nature, but the Son of God clothed with Humanity, returning double to the throne, whence single He had descended. "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth ;" the Word who was eternally with God, who contained all the life of God, who wrought all the works of God, the creator of God's universe first, and then its light. He was made flesh

and dwelt among us that He might shew God's favour unto us, that He might declare God's truth unto us; that He might, through our own flesh, express God unto us, yea, that He might make us sons of God, who should believe on His name, even on His name as the Word made flesh. To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. In the Word was life, but the Word was made flesh. Therefore in the Word made flesh is life, and they who receive the word of God from Him who is the Word made flesh, they have in them the life of God. Having received the word from His mouth, and the sacramental seal from His hand, He unites them to Himself. He makes them partakers of His substance, He gives them His flesh to eat, and fills to them the cup of salvation with His own blood, which is the life of God flowing unto us through the veins of a man. He feeds us with His flesh and blood first, and then calls us to do work commensurate with our meat and drink, even to rule with Him the universe of God. He makes us partakers of *Himself* first, afterwards of His Kingdom. He gives us the greater gift first, even Himself, then the lesser gift, the possession of all things.

They who partake of Him now as the Word made flesh, and slain for us, shall soon see Him according to the last glorious vision of Him contained in Holy Scripture, when in the name which belongs to Him as the Maker of all things, He shall appear to sweep from the creation which He made the last and foulest enemies by which it shall be polluted (Rev. xix. 13, &c.). That we may see Him with joy, that He may find us in peace in that day, let us be diligent, remembering His own word, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Let us make our calling and election sure, that we may follow Him in that day among His "called and chosen and faithful ones," who heard in due time of His Kingdom, and submitted themselves to the discipline whereby He prepared them for it. Amen.

## VII.

### 'SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

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EP.—Gal. iv. 1. GOSP.—St. Matt. i. 18.

IN the gospel of the day is related how God prevailed to bring Christ into the world according to the flesh. In the epistle is set forth the struggle of the apostle to retain Him in the Church according to the Spirit. David, the obedient king, had two descendants worthy of his name: the Virgin, whom all generations shall call blessed; and her husband who feared God, her faithful guardian and of her Holy Child, who should have the honour, in conjunction with his betrothed wife, of giving to God's Son the name by which He should be called among the sons of men. By the faith of Mary, through the obedience of Joseph, the Holy Child findeth an entrance into the world, and a place where to abide. When God brought His Son into the world, He gave abundant assurance of His wonderful working to faith and love, but He did not present to all men, and in all places, overwhelming evidence of that wherein He was engaged. Before Messiah is brought into the world a child is born, who shall go before Him, born by miracle from a barren mother. The father, who hears of the wonder prepared for his house from an angel's lips, staggers at the announcement and is stricken dumb. At the naming of the child the father's dumbness is taken away, and the first recovery of his speech is in a song of thanksgiving and prophecy. This birth of the precursor miraculously from his mother, accompanied with a double miracle upon his father, was known to a few, and might have been known to all Israel, for Zechariah was a priest,



and one who served in the order of his course. But we learn not from the sacred narrative of any extraordinary means adopted to publish the fact and force it, as a demonstration, upon the minds of all. Zechariah and Elizabeth, and their neighbours and friends, knew that God was in the midst of them working wonders, but they are not encouraged to give Him glory and abide in His fear by the rulers, and teachers, and chief men of Israel coming unto them to hear of what they experienced, and to join with them in their thanksgivings. The honoured woman, chosen from amongst all to be the mother of Messiah, hears from an angel the announcement of God's wonderful grace unto her. Like her father Abraham, she believes what is spoken unto her and asks no sign. She only desires to understand the message, then she bows her will to God, and says, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word." She knows that a messenger from God has spoken to her, and she experiences the power of God upon her according to the tenour of his words. But how shall she prove to others what she knows herself? How shall she satisfy the mind even of him who hath chosen her to be his lawful wife? After her wonderful conception she departed from Galilee to Judea, to be with Elizabeth, whom the angel had spoken of, and her faith is wonderfully confirmed by that which happens to Elizabeth and to herself. But who knows these things save the two women themselves? Who heard that song of praise, "My soul doth magnify the Lord"? Who knew that the Virgin Mother's tongue was loosed for such utterance in the Spirit? The vision by which Joseph's doubts and perplexities are all resolved is additional assurance and confirmation to the blessed Virgin. But will Joseph's vision satisfy the Scribes? Is such a fact as that evidence that the High Priest will regard? God shuts up unto Himself those in whom He has been working,

and in due time He will manifest what He hath wrought. Christ came into the world marvellously, with manifold manifestation of God's presence and operation: yet, who beyond the few persons most immediately concerned in His work knew aught of what He was doing? Almost unobserved the Sun arose which, in due time, was to cover with light the whole universe of God; the first gush of the Spring, whose waters were to flow through all space and time, was witnessed by one or two: so gently, yet effectually, did God take possession of the creation which He was coming to save out of the hands of the destroyer. When the Lord would introduce His Church into the world, He wrought first in a few of whom the world knew nothing. He gave to them, in due time, His Holy Spirit, and they wrought wonders in His name, which few who were contemporary with them (except those converted to God by their words) cared much about. When God's Church was set up upon the earth, the ministers of Christ did not strive to win the world unto it by merely presenting before men the demonstration of the miracles which attended its foundation. They endeavoured, rather, to keep the Church itself in the understanding of its calling, and the experience of the grace which it was planted in, in order that it might speak for itself, that not the past might commend the present, but that the present might commend itself and show itself the worthy result of a glorious past, and the seed and hope of a no less glorious future. The gospel for this day declares what Christ should be in the midst of the Church of God. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." "They shall call His name Emmanuel (that is) God with us." When these words were spoken, Messiah's visible people were expecting him to appear amongst them for a different object. They waited to see Him break the Roman yoke and make the dominion pass from the Gentiles unto Israel. A heavier yoke must be broken first, more terrible

enemies must be overcome, a more glorious Kingdom must be won. "He will save His people from their sins." He will deliver them first from their inward enemies, afterwards from the outward oppressor. "Judgment must begin at the House of God." Messiah's land in the highest and most intimate sense is His people themselves. That land is overrun and defiled with abominable inhabitants, more impure, more cruel, more impious than the sons of Canaan and Amalek. The true Joshua will first cleanse the true land. Man's spirit, man's reason, his imagination, his affections, his outward being, must be made pure and holy to be occupied for ever by the Most Holy and Pure Lord God Almighty. The zeal of Jesus Christ will accomplish this. He will make His people feel that their deadliest enemies are shut up within them, and expend their first care in their extirpation. The angel mentions one class alone of enemies, as if they only were worthy of consideration, "He shall save you from your sins." Those being cast out of you, God will fill their place with such powers from Himself, as will make the overthrow of all remaining enemies easy work. Jesus saves us from our sins because He is God with us: God in our flesh to begin with, bringing righteousness Himself out of that from which His law had long and ineffectually demanded obedience; God in the midst of us, enabling us to follow the example which He Himself, as a man, as one of ourselves, has set before us; God with us, originating, and seconding in everything, condescending to be our yoke-fellow, standing by our side, and holding us up in every work that is true and good; God with us for ever, making us joint heirs with Him of all that He is heir to. Thus the gospel for the day announces Messiah unto us. The epistle presents to us His minister struggling against those in the Christian Church who were striving to cast out Emmanuel, and to hold in His place mere symbols of Him, figures and shadows and curious emblems of some of His actings.

God Himself, they would drive forth, keeping all the while His picture. Paul cries unto the Church for ever, Take heed how you play with the things of God, shrinking from God Himself. He has adopted you as sons; let His life stir within you. He calleth you His heirs; let Him teach you the extent of your inheritance, and give you an earnest of every part of it. He will not employ you as servants in making models of what He worketh, but He wants to behold in you His sons, enjoying the substance of all that He has prefigured, and expressing your gratitude in every tongue, with the distinctness, the confidence, the fullness which His Spirit, dwelling in you, alone can give. Amen.

## VIII.

### SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

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*Ep.*—GAL. iv. 1. *Gosp.*—ST. MATTHEW i. 18.

By the grace of God we have kept again the festival of the Incarnation, the wondrous memorial of the boundless condescension of God and of the ineffable exaltation of man. The Holy Scriptures for the Communion Service on the day of the Nativity declare to us who was incarnate, even the eternal Word of God “by whom all things were made, without whom not anything was made that was made”—the Son who made the worlds, unto whom all things made shall be subjected, unto whom when He cometh to take possession of His Kingdom the first created and most glorious creatures of God shall do homage and offer worship. The fact of His incarnation has been declared. This day the manner of it is set forth, “He was conceived by the Holy Ghost; He was born of the Virgin Mary.” “God sent forth His Son made of a woman.” He was the woman’s seed promised from the beginning.

Woman without man was first in the transgression; woman without man shall by the power of the Most High bring forth the Son who shall take away transgression and abolish sin. He is made under law; He is bound to fulfil its requirements, to endure its penalty. The woman broke the law; her Son shall keep it, and shall expiate the sin by which the nature which His mother gave to Him was stained. The Apostle wrote to those who seemed to be zealous for law. They would put themselves under perfect training and attain thereby to perfect righteousness. Know ye, he said, the law expecteth no righteousness from you. The law waiteth for

the Seed to whom the promise was made, and having found Him transacteth with Him alone. From Him, and from Him alone, the law receiveth entire satisfaction. He will not worship a false God, nor the true God in a false way. He will not take the name of God in vain. He will honour God's Sabbaths and all His Holy institutions with perfect honour. He will be obedient to His father and mother. He will not take away life by murder, nor defile it by adultery, nor make it destitute by theft. He will never hurt His neighbour by slandering his name. He will never covet his goods. He will love the Lord His God with all His heart and mind and soul and strength. He will love His neighbour as Himself; and thus being without blame He shall submit to bear the blame of all, being pronounced by the law without blemish and without spot. He shall offer himself as the sacrifice which the law demands, the antitype and substance of every offering from the beginning of the world, every offering which God's law prescribed and man's faith presented, to bleed beneath God's altar, to be consumed upon it. "God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," instead of being unprofitable servants placed under a law which we were always breaking. Christ maketh us Sons of God. The first man was made perfect, and set to obey Him who made him, learning His will from a commandment given; "the second man is the Lord from Heaven," who has brought into man's nature the very life of God Himself, that we might instinctively desire that which is according to God's will. Christ came into our flesh that He might save us from our sins, and bestow upon us a nature which should never commit sin or desire to commit it.

We gave Him our human nature laden with guilt, under the curse of the law subject to death. He restores it unto us released from condemnation, its sins taken away, its death commuted into everlasting life.

This time-state is the period of our probation, and in this

the probation consists, in proving whether we will consent to make the transition from the old man to the new ; whether we will entirely put off the old man which is corrupt, and put on the new man which is created in the image of God. If we have made the wise choice let us adhere to it. God drove out the first man, the last Adam he hath made Lord of all. They who honour Him as God hath honoured Him, calling Him Lord, shall live with Him and be like Him for ever.

## IX.

### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—COL. ii. 8.    *Gosp.*—St. LUKE ii. 15.

THE voice of apostolic warning cried unto the Church in the beginning, Submit ye to the Circumcision of Christ, let Him prove in you what His Spirit of righteousness and holiness can effect. Philosophy and vain deceit, on the contrary, sought to make an opposite counsel prevail. They said to men, Circumcise yourselves; surround yourselves with the traditions which men have found to be good in their day and have transmitted to you; discipline yourselves according to the rudiments of the world, which have obtained the sanction and come with the approbation of the world, and you shall attain unto the true moral condition of which circumcision is the sign; practise abstinence with respect to certain meats and drinks, observe days and months which were instituted in times of old to shadow forth the purpose and works of God; apply all these elements to yourselves, and the result will be that you shall become righteous and well-trained men, fit to be entrusted with living powers, and competent to use them in the best and wisest way. The men who withstood St. Paul did not deliberately propose to themselves to follow courses which should end in their ruin and in the ruin of the Church. They thought, no doubt, that they were wise, and that he was foolish; that his plan for making men good was questionable; that their methods, on the other hand, were long and well proved, and commended by the strongest recommendations. Multitudes would bear witness to the force and efficacy of what they enjoined, against whose authority his solitary protest would have little weight. Yet he cried unto the



Church, "Ye are complete in Christ, in Him bodily dwells all the fulness of God." Ye cannot be circumcised by any one in whom dwells not all the fulness of God. Nothing but the fulness of God can effect the change in you of which circumcision is the sign. You are substituting something else for the fulness of God; instead of the supplies which out of that fulness can flow in upon you by virtue of your union with Him in whom that fulness dwells, you are furnishing yourselves with help which men can bring to you, not from God, but from storehouses of their own, or from storehouses where God once deposited supplies, but where they are found no longer; the end will be you will be spoiled, all the treasure that you should hold will be lost, all the furnishing with which you should be furnished will be destroyed or become the prey of an enemy.

There are two errors: the first that righteousness can come from flesh, it is so good; the second that flesh is so bad that even God cannot bring righteousness out of it. One maintains either that the flesh has not fallen or that the fallen can redeem itself, the other that even God cannot redeem it.

The Apostle Paul strove to bring the Church to the experience that it was the body of Him who containeth bodily the fulness of God. Church history ever since proves how mightily and how successfully he was resisted. The problem of corporate holiness is yet to be solved. Great will be the honour of the generation to whom, in the plain sense of the word, the language will apply, "without blame before Him in love." God is able to "sanctify us wholly, body, soul, and spirit." Christ expects some time to have a Church "which shall be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless," wearing not only the covering of His perfect righteousness imputed, but wearing also the covering of His Spirit, of that Spirit the fruit of whose indwelling and operation is a moral aggregate, composed of these nine elements, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." This is the moral condition which is attain-

able by the Church before the resurrection. Those who will allow the Spirit of God to work this result in them shall be safe wherever their locality may be. The wicked one will not be able to touch that upon which Christ's cross has been laid, and upon which Christ's Spirit hath wrought, but those who refuse Christ's sanctification cannot be secure in any place.

Heaven itself over our heads cannot shelter us unless the Kingdom of Heaven be within us, and "the Kingdom of Heaven is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

In no age of the Church as yet has the Spirit of God had full liberty to do all that He could do for the glory of Christ. This is the day when every one who has a will and a purpose is seeking for freedom to do according to his will and to accomplish his purpose. The Head of the Church hath a will and a purpose. His Spirit is upon the earth till the end of the age; to enable every generation of the Church to embody that will and execute that purpose; we have not only great things behind us and before us, but we have great things by our side. The difficulty with men has always been "to establish them in the present truth," to make them avail themselves to the utmost of the present help. Every man who is spiritual is tempted to make his watermark the measure to which and no farther the Spirit in the Church shall rise. There is no watermark in the Church. Who can measure the "fulness of the Godhead?" Let us open our mouth wide that we may be filled; we are not straitened in the Lord; let our faith be enlarged, let us hope for His deliverance, let us yield to His Spirit, that we may be found to be those whom He can deliver to His honour. Amen.

## X.

### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—COL. ii. 8. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE ii. 15.

THE Apostle warns the Church against robbers, “beware lest any man spoil you.”

He warns against robbers coming in the form of benefactors, against those who came proffering help.

Men said to the believers in Christ, “We know what you want. You seek a cure of the inveterate sinfulness of your nature. We have a cure to administer; we can tell you of specifics, of remedies, which are the prescriptions of the wisest men who have ever lived; remedies of world-wide fame, time-honoured remedies, which have come down from father to son, to which one generation after another has set the seal of approval; we propose to you helps which God Himself, the God of your fathers, your God, has instituted. He has appointed certain ceremonies, certain uses of material things, certain consecrations of appointed times; He has given certain counsels of perfection. We recommend these things to your adoption. Following the rules which we have obtained for you from these treasures of wisdom, of traditional experience, of Divine appointment, you will obtain what you ardently seek, you will make yourselves virtuous, and becoming virtuous you will be admitted into communion with God and with all the high and heavenly powers which He has created.” Beware of these benefactors with high-sounding titles; they will not bring to you what they promise, they will only succeed in turning you away from Him by whom God’s help for your difficulties has really come. You belong to Him in whom

dwelleth bodily the whole fulness of God. You are shut up to One Person whom you can approach, whom you can see and hear and feel, to one who hath a body born on earth, enthroned in Heaven, from Him you must receive all that you want. All the help that God is pleased to give you, yea that God can give you, He gives by Him. All the sufficiency of God for the wants of His Church and of His creation dwells in Him, is at His disposal; you need not go beyond Him, you cannot go beyond Him. He is the head of all principality and power, of everything that rules, of everything that attains pre-eminence and honourable distinction. Ye are complete in Him which is the Head of all principality and power. He is the Head of all principality and power, and He is the Head of you, God's Church, who are called to the highest place of rule amongst God's creatures, to the highest distinction and pre-eminence amongst all. The highest place, the fullest glory, come to you by Him and by Him alone. By Him also comes the preparation for these things. He fulfilled in His own person all that circumcision set forth. He made our human nature to live not to its own pleasure and glory, but to the will and pleasure of God. He put the nature which had fallen under the true law of restraint, the obedience of self-denial. He condemned sin in flesh, and in flesh magnified God's law and made it honourable.

He performed all that Circumcision indicated and meant, and then instituted another holy rite, which he also exhausted. The death and resurrection set forth in Baptism were accomplished in Him. He who denied Himself perfectly died for the sins of all who had been ruined through self-indulgence, and having died for all rose again, the beginning of the new creation unto life everlasting. Ye are circumcised in Him; by His operation in you you attain to the true self-denial. You are also baptised into Him that that which denied itself may also die, and that having died it may rise again in the glory of the regeneration. By the true Circumcision we deny ourselves and renounce our own glory. By Baptism we are

yielded up to God that we may know and do His will, that we may be fitted by Him for His Kingdom, and exercise whatever trusts and gifts He may confide unto us until that Kingdom come. All that Circumcision typified, all that Baptism contains and signifies, we have by Jesus Christ. Through Him we trust in God. We have faith in the operation of God, we believe that God will raise us up as He raised Him up. In our Baptism we are not only submitted to a law that restrains our nature, we are buried into its death, and after burial we rise again to its glorious resurrection. Blessed are they who are baptised into Christ, and who have faith in the operation of God, who beseech of God to fulfil to the uttermost what in Holy Baptism He pledged Himself to accomplish in behalf of the baptised. But what shall be the misery of those who have been baptised, and who refuse or fail to ask God to fulfil what their baptism means, what to those who have faith in His inworking it conveys! When Jesus was circumcised then was His name given unto Him. Then he began to shew the power of the name Jesus. He indicated how He should save men from their sins. He shewed how He would strip the principalities and powers of evil of all right to do their pleasure with man's nature.

Making man's flesh obedient unto God's law first, and then in flesh made obedient enduring the penalty of the broken law, He spoiled the principalities and powers of evil and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them, rescuing for ever from their grasp and from every pretence of righteous claim the nature in which He triumphed.

Jesus was circumcised, but Circumcision was abolished in His Church, though allowed for a little while to the Jewish believers because of their weakness. He was circumcised, because He alone wrought what Circumcision typified. He kept the law, and when He kept it and bore its curse it was nailed to His cross, never more to pass from it to any man. Henceforth no man must seek to justify himself before God by keeping a law; but every man who will be saved

from his sins, and who would be perfected after God's manner of perfection, must trust in Him whom God has sent, must receive all supplies, all needful grace and help, out of the fulness of Him in whom dwelleth bodily all the fulness of the Godhead.

The Church strove hard to go back to Circumcision; almost the whole work of the Apostle of the Gentiles was to hinder the return. What was hindered in one age broke forth in successive ages under divers forms, forms as opposite to each other as the condition of the Greek to the barbarian, as the condition of the slave to the freeman. In every age men have been striving to please God and to justify themselves by keeping a law, but the Church baptised into Christ has been shrinking from and refusing His fulness.

Paul cried unto the Church in the first age; the cry needs to be repeated after the lapse of so many centuries, Cease from the madness of demanding living service from that which is dead. You were dead in sins and dead in an unrestrained corrupt nature, which would have accumulated sins more and more and for ever. While in that state you were joined to the Living One. You were not taken out of that state and joined to Him; while in that state you were quickened with Him, your sins were forgiven, the law that condemned you was blotted out. You received a new guidance indicated in your Baptism, a passing away with Christ from the natural condition into the condition of the new creature, raised from the dead, glorified, and exalted to the right hand of God. Receive what Christ has to give, welcome those by whom He sends His gifts, esteem duly that with which His grace is bound up. Eat His flesh, drink His blood; seek not to deliver yourselves from the curse of God, accept the deliverance which Christ has brought. Be not willing to do without the blessing which Christ has obtained for us, which He dispenses from the right hand of Him who hath bestowed it.

The Church, as the Circumcision, has a triple duty. First,

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to recover and to abound in the pure worship of God ; secondly, to rejoice in Him by whom in One Person that service has been already perfectly rendered, by whom in One Body it would now be offered ; thirdly, to have no confidence in any help which we can obtain for ourselves while we seek to know and to receive all the help which God has ordained for us. Amen.

## XI.

### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—ROM. xii. 15. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE ii. 41.

THE epistle calls upon all Christians to present their bodies unto God for His use and service. The gospel records the first offering of Himself unto God of Him who is the example to be followed by all.

Jesus was consecrated to God by His parents in the rite of circumcision. He was duly presented in the Temple when forty days from His birth were expired. He was brought up by His parents to the feast of the Passover in compliance with the law which enjoined that all the males in Israel should three times a year in the great feasts appear before the Lord. The gospel for the day records the first offering of Himself by Himself, for although His parents brought Him to Jerusalem they did not direct all His movements there. Some things necessary to be done by Him at that time were either beyond their knowledge or had escaped their recollection. His duty to God at twelve years old He knew more perfectly than His blessed mother and her wise and faithful husband could teach Him. He presented Himself before God in His Temple in the midst of the teachers of God's law that He might hear and ask questions concerning the will of God. All His members are enjoined in the epistle to follow this example, where they are instructed not only to present their bodies unto God, but to do so in order to learn from God "His good and acceptable and perfect will." Jesus presented Himself before God at twelve years old, for whatever profound reasons, at least for this plain one, to teach us that there is a certain period in every man's life, and



that the earliest, according to the growth of intelligence, when every human being must transact for himself with God. We must come before God, not as offered by others only, but as offering ourselves. The young must take upon themselves the vows which others made in their behalf; they must put their own seal on what their parents and guardians and sponsors and the Church itself have done for them, that the Lord may not say unto any in the day of judgment, "I never knew you." All must make themselves known unto Him; they must call upon Him, so to speak, and give Him their names, that He may write them in the book of His remembrance. We must not rest in the fact that we were offered to God in our infancy by our parents when they brought us into the Church for Holy Baptism. We must not be as those thrust, as it were, into God's Presence by the circumstances which surround us in a Christian land, and in a day of religious earnestness. We must, everyone for himself, as soon as we can, intelligently and willingly present our bodies unto God that He may know them as introduced to Him by the souls which informed them; that He may count them up, and reckon upon them as persons in the great human family placed at His disposal, available for His service, instruments to His hand, which He may use in whatever work He is pleased to do upon the earth in their time.

Every man must offer his own body; without this all other offerings of him are unconfirmed, unsealed transactions; and he can offer no substitute for his body. He cannot, like a wealthy conscript in an army of an earthly king, buy an exemption from bodily service by a high money compensation. He cannot stay at home himself and send gold in his stead to purchase a substitute for him. He must serve himself. God wants you first, then yours. He wants to see your body to take note of it. It is of more value in His sight than all that can adorn, endow, or enrich it. He has placed a human body on His own throne in Heaven at his right

hand, indicating thereby that for human bodies given to Him He has reserved the highest place and the mightiest and most glorious work in the midst of all His creatures.

Let all, especially let the young, think upon the lesson taught to us in the epistle of the day, and upon the example furnished to us by the gospel. Give your bodies to God, as Christ gave His. Acknowledge God's righteous claim, as Christ acknowledged it. Christ's body belonged to God, so do yours. "He made us, and His we are. He made us to be the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand." The epistle calls upon us not only to consecrate ourselves unto God, but to see to it that we learn the way of consecration to God from God Himself, that we learn from Him what is proper to our circumstances and to our dispensation to learn, that we be taught the fear of God, not by "the precept of men," but by the teaching of God Himself. God taught the Child Jesus more than His mother knew, and the Holy Child was faithful to Him that taught Him, even though that faithfulness caused amazement and pain to His earthly parents. The Christian Church was bound to serve God, not in the way that its Jewish mother could shew, nor in the way which could be pointed out by the godly among the heathen, nor by the Patriarchs, nor by Adam himself, who first heard the Gospel from the lips of God; but after a manner and in a power which they should receive from the Head of the Church Himself, exalted to the right hand of God, bestowing from God the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Church was shut up unto Christ, in whom was gathered up the law and the prophets and all that God had ever given to mankind of good and true; from Him everything of God was to be derived, not with its old mark and stamp upon it, but with His mark and seal in its essence and true spiritual meaning which it received from Him. "Be not conformed to men," but be "transformed by God," was the admonition of the Apostle to those whom he would shut up to God's teaching, and whom he would charge to reverence and guard the con-

stitution of God's Church in order that that teaching might be possible and effectual. Christ not only presented His body unto God, but also "learned the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." We are to follow Him in this also. The last lesson which we learn from the epistle and gospel is that no transaction with God, however real or high, shall make us think too much of ourselves, and behave unseemly towards others with whom God has united us. The temptation of the spiritual is pride. After His consecration of Himself unto God, in which His mother and her husband were left behind and proved deficient, it is especially and with emphasis recorded how He was subject to them still. Having obeyed first his Heavenly Father, then was He subject also to His earthly mother and His earthly guardian, and God's blessing was upon Him, and He grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man. We should experience the like according to our measure if our obedience were perfect, first to God, then to all others to whom His will has subordinated us. As a general rule health and strength would be the attributes of our bodies, wisdom of our minds, and even our enemies would be at peace with us till our work was done. Amen.

## XII.

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—ROM. xii. 6. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN ii. 1.

IN the gospel for the day the Lord is seen dispensing the wine of this world, in the epistle the wine of the world to come. He grudges neither to those who receive them and use them in the fear of God. His first miracle was wrought at a marriage. Marriage, instituted by God in the garden of Eden, was sanctioned by the presence and blessing of the Son of God, even after man's fall from innocence and expulsion from his inheritance.

He stood at the fountain of human society mingling blessings with its waters. He came to crucify the natural, indeed, and to raise it up again in a new condition, yet not to destroy natural happiness, but even to enhance it.

The wedding company was not scared by His presence, but their means of enjoyment, even their material means, were increased thereby. He sanctioned the holy institution, and helped them to a joyous celebration of it. The festive occasion was not suffered by His grace and bounty to lack the means of festivity. He introduced Himself amongst men, sparing to them everything good that yet remained with them, not abridging, but increasing their enjoyments. He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and His delights were with the sons of men. He is the same yet. He is not present with us only in the Church rejoicing over us there, and only tolerating us everywhere else; wherever men are united for the necessary and honourable purposes of life, even of every-day, present, natural life, there is He also ready to be one amongst them, "standing at the door and

knocking" for admission, that He may come into the midst of them and enable them to do aright and with happiness what they have a right to do. He seeks to be present at our feasts in our own houses as truly as He desires to be present with us in the feast of the House of God. He did not seek an assembly of worshippers, a company of men confessing their sins and bewailing themselves before God, that He might work His first miracle amongst them; but into the midst of the joyous company met together to celebrate the principal event in ordinary life He came with His disciples to partake of their hospitality and to enhance their enjoyment. The Lord Jesus Christ is not limited to the sacred place where the holy emblems of His presence are deposited. Wherever men are met together lawfully and righteously there is He, taking an interest in what they do and how they do it. He despises none of our places of meeting, from the playground of children to the senate house of an empire. Only he would purify our mirth and our toil from the spirit of selfishness, of malice and of wickedness, and add to us the spirit of wisdom and love. Nothing has so tended to destroy the power of religion as the effort to confine it all within the walls where public worship is carried on and mysteries celebrated; it has brought masquerade and unreality into the sanctuary of holy worship, and given the outer court of daily life to be indeed trodden down by the Gentiles. The God of all the habitations of Israel will not be imprisoned in a shrine, but will be in all His people, and will walk about amongst them; and those who admit Him to their games when they play and to their tasks when they labour, them does He meet with in His holy place and make them joyful in His house of prayer. If we believe that God is present in our every-day employments and our lawful enjoyments, we will perform those with dignity and partake of these without excess. But the feeling is widely diffused, and has penetrated deeply, that God is only with us when we are on our knees before the altar and when we are reciting prayers, reading Holy Scripture and hearing

sermons; that then by submitting to His ways we obtain a license to go forth and carry on the business and pleasure of life in ways of our own. We need to remember what the Church holds up to us this day out of Holy Scripture, that Christ's first miracle was not at a Temple service or in a Church meeting, but at a wedding feast. Blessed is the nation which makes room for Him in all its assemblies, which holds no meetings but those which He can be invited unto, and unto which He is invited. And blessed are the men and women who come together in holy marriage in such a way as that they can invite Him to the wedding; and blessed are all who consecrate their work and their relaxation from work to the Lord their Saviour. But if the Lord was willing to be present at the marriage of this world, and to enhance the natural joy, how much more doth He rejoice to be present at the heavenly marriage and to dispense and to increase the heavenly enjoyments. He who mingled the cup of joy for strangers, shall He not fill it for His own guests, who are not only His guests, but His very bride? When He was but a guest at the feast, how He increased the supply and happiness of the feast! How much more shall He do this when He is present not as a guest, but as the Master of the feast, as the Furnisher of it Himself. He who was glad to give the marriage company abundance of wine, does He not rejoice to bestow upon His own members the fulness of the spirit which He hath obtained for them? Would He not have them in joyfulness passing from one to another the cup of salvation? The epistle for the day presents to us a scene which the Head of the Church would have to be a perpetual reality in His Church till His return. The grace of the Holy Ghost abounding and flowing forth in the garden of God through many streams—every one in the Church, giving to all and receiving from all. But there is needed now the prayer of the mystical Mary—the prayer which, though reproved at first for something in it needing correction, shall yet be answered in the end. Already the cry has gone up unto Him

“they have no wine,” and we have seen the beginnings of His answer. And what He gave in the beginning is not greater than what he hath now to give according to the necessities of His people. Yea, it shall be said again unto Him, “Thou hast kept the good wine until now.” Let us rejoice because of all the good that we have seen, which we have striven to mar, but which the Lord has preserved to us, and let us trust Him still, and expect greater things. His hand is not shortened, His ear is not heavy. He is still in the midst of His Church, full of blessings, waiting for those upon whom He can bestow them.

### XIII.

#### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—ROM. xii. 6.    *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN ii. 1.

THE Lord's first miracle was at a wedding feast. He came to put honour upon the institutions of God. He began with the first. He came into the world not only to "make all things new," but to conserve the old until "the fulness of the time" for their removal should appear. He sustains and exhilarates the natural which passeth away, whilst bringing in and establishing the supernatural which shall abide for ever. His first mighty act called men's minds back to Paradise, where marriage was instituted, testifying unto them that although Paradise was lost unto men by sin, the sacrament of God's blessing there bestowed was not lost; that God would stand by His ordinance in the fallen world as well as in the world of innocence; that He would preserve and sanctify it for the present blessings which it conveys, and for the future and greater blessings which it prefigures and promises. Human society is of God's creation. The laws for its production, for its education and guidance and government when produced, and for its well-being and peace until the hour of its full redemption hath sounded, are all of Him.

Blessed are the marriages where Christ is present. Blessed are the schools of instruction, and the institutions of human government, where He and God who sent Him are not ignored; where all things are taught and done in the understanding that wisdom and power belong unto God alone, and from Him descend to the human race by one Mediator alone, even Jesus Christ the Lord; where faith in God is true, and prayer unto Him is earnest and undoubting.



The spirit which has long been labouring, and not unsuccessfully, to exclude God from the government of men, has of late striven greatly to take away sacredness and Divine sanction from Marriage, to make it too easy of access to those whom its holy bonds should never unite, and too easy of dissolution to those impatient of its restraints and discipline. Christ's first miracle of blessing was not in the Temple, but in a private dwelling. If we would be blessed by Him in the Church we must allow Him to bless us also, and in the first place in our own houses. The Church is made up of many families, which are blessed separately before they are blessed together. The natural relationship was honoured first, the superadded, although higher state, came second in order. If the houses of the people are in a wrong condition, the Church, which is composed of them, can never be in a right one. And Christ is in the houses of His people, to stand by, support, bless, and cheer everything which testifies of an institution of God; not to sanction devices and contrivances for social happiness and perfection by men themselves invented. He is in the houses of His people, as He was present at the marriage feast, not to darken and embitter by austerity, but to increase all innocent enjoyment, and to make the experience of all testify to the truth that "godliness hath the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come." Christ supplied wine at the marriage feast. He increased the joy to human society constituting itself in God. Society, seeking to increase and maintain itself and fill itself with happiness by means which God has not ordained, cannot be cheered by Christ's presence nor helped by His favour. He came to preserve nature till He should lift it to a higher dignity; sin He came to destroy for ever. With nature in festivity He can have sympathy; to nature rioting in sin He can only come in sorrow and in judgment.

Christ's first miracle was at a marriage feast. He who blessed the earliest and most sacred union existing in the world by Divine appointment, is present for ever amongst the

children of men whenever they come together in an honourable and righteous manner, for ends which God sanctions, in ways which His revelation prescribes. Much more where men are united to God and to one another as the Body of Christ is He present, who said, "Where two or three are met together in My name there am I in the midst of them." "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He was present at the marriage feast as a giver. Now where He is present He waits to hear that supplies from Him are needed. She who was nearest unto Him expressed the common want. It is the blessed privilege of the Church to intercede with clearer understanding than the natural mother for the true wine; to know when the old stores are exhausted, when new necessities make new demands, when that which served for a past occasion can serve no more, and routine must make way for progress. The intercession at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee was reproved because it "knew not the times and the seasons;" it would have brought in the Kingdom without the humiliation and death of the King. Now that Jesus hath been glorified and the Spirit hath been given, the intercession of the Church should be perfect, "for the Spirit which is in us maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

The epistle for the day shews unto us the Lord filling the true vessels of purification with the wine of the Kingdom, and giving laws for the right dispensation of the Heavenly gift. "We are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." One life fills the natural body of a man and expresses itself differently through every member. The foot does not see nor the eye run, yet it is the one life which sees in the eye and runs in the feet. The life in the Body of Christ is the Spirit of God. One grace has been given to us, different gifts are developed in us. Let the grace be prized and kept, let the results intended to flow from it not be withheld. Let those whom the Spirit enables to prophesy speak what the Spirit gives them and no more, and let them not

exaggerate nor make one interpretation of God's Word inconsistent with some other. Those to whom ministry is appointed let them give themselves to their ministry, not being weary of doing over and over again the same thing. Let those who are enabled to exhort give themselves to exhorting, not wearying, though they be made to repeat themselves every day. Let him that ruleth use despatch, that those who come after him be not forced to stand still and be thereby tempted to impatience. To all who are partakers of the Spirit of Christ the admonition is given, "Be not wise by yourselves." Count not yourselves to have attained until the body be perfected, and seek that the highest earnest of the perfection which is coming unto the completed body shall be realised in that generation in which your lots are cast. A few were employed to carry wine from the bountiful replenisher of the marriage feast to the master of the assembly and to all the guests. Now every member of the assembly is expected to be a "vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's use," one by whom the joy of all shall be increased. Let none bring the "spirit of heaviness" with him to mar the common happiness but the spirit of brotherly love and charity, the spirit of hope and joy, the spirit of willing and hearty consecration to the service and honour of the Lord our God. Amen.

## XIV.

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—ROM. xii. 6. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN ii. 1.

THOSE who have helped Christ in one stage of His work must take care that they do not obstruct Him in a succeeding phase of it. He who was the greatest of the prophets, who pointed out Messiah to all Israel, who baptised Him in the river Jordan, and saw the Holy Ghost as a dove descending upon Him, as Christ's work proceeded needed to have this message sent unto him, at least, spoken to his messengers, "Blessed is he that is not offended in Me." To His chosen disciples the Lord said, "He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved." Blessed are they who give liberty to Christ; who know how "to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make His paths straight." Both the epistle and gospel for this day shew us how all must hold back and stand in awe of God. The gentle reproof administered to her who was blessed among women, is a warning to all that none may presume. Even she by whom Christ came into the world must not attempt to guide His hand. He is her Son, but He is also her Lord and her God. She is a creature, He is the Creator of all things. She did not know what He ought to be engaged in when He was twelve years old, much less can she know what He ought to do when now He has been baptised, and has been anointed with the Spirit and has commenced His public ministry. After the event of this marriage in Cana of Galilee, we never see any appearance of interference with the work of her Son on the part of the blessed mother. We are told, indeed, of His mother and His brethren seeking to obtain an audience of Him when He was engaged in teach-

ing the people, and we see how their claims upon His attention at such a time are set aside. Let us behold what is written in St. Matt. xii. 47, &c. : "Then one said unto Him, Behold Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak unto Thee. But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever *shall do the will of My Father* which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." Again, in St. Mark it is written (iii. 31, &c.) : "There came then His brethren and His mother, and standing without sent unto Him, calling Him. And the *multitude sat* about Him. And they said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren without seek for Thee. And He answered them, saying, Who is My mother or My brethren? And He *looked round about on them which sat* about Him, and said, Behold, My mother and My brethren! For whosoever *shall do the will of God*, the same is My brother, and My sister, and My mother." In the Gospel according to St. Matthew, the blessing seems limited to the immediate disciples of the Lord; in that according to St. Mark, it is extended to all who sat around Him as He taught, even to the whole multitude, for the multitude sat about Him. The multitude was doing the will of God, receiving Him whom *God* had sent; the disciples were doing the will of *His Father which was in heaven*, for they were receiving "from Him the words which the Father gave unto Him," and were yielding themselves unto Him that He might prepare them to be sent by Him into all the world, to preach the Gospel to every creature. Let us also look at the narrative in the Gospel according to St. Luke (viii. 19, &c.) : "Then came to Him His mother and His brethren, and could not come at Him for the press. And it was told Him by certain which said, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee. And He answered and said unto them, My mother and My brethren are

those which *hear the word of God, and do it.*" The order in the Gospels must not be disregarded—"whosoever shall do the will of My Father"—"whosoever shall do the will of God"—"whosoever shall hear the word of God, and do it." It is as much as to say, Blessed are they who do God's will; and that they may do it, learn it first, and in order to learn it, take His own way, even to hear His word, and to do it. Blessed are they who do God's will, and who learn from Himself by His own word what "that good and acceptable and perfect will is."

By the blessed Virgin Christ came into the world; by her betrothed husband the Holy Child was shielded in infancy, and snatched from the cruel rage of Herod; but by neither, as His work proceeded, were His sayings and His acts understood; and of His kinsmen generally it is written, that when they heard of what he was doing, and of what was happening during the progress of His ministry, "they went out to lay hold on Him, for they said, He is beside Himself." At His first miracle, during His whole ministry, the Lord guarded His Church against those exaggerations which after ages of darkness and of zeal without knowledge have brought forth, and which even now have attained to such a magnitude that the very throne of grace is no longer seen to be the seat of God, but of the human instrument by whom He accomplished the mystery of the Incarnation. In the gospel we are shown that even the blessed mother must not intermeddle with the work of her Son. The chapter from which the epistle is taken begins with a warning against usurpation: "I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think." Let no one take upon him more than God has charged him with; let every one present himself unto God as a living sacrifice. To every one so presented before Him, God gives his place; let no one choose for himself, not even through zeal for God. In the place where the great act of usurpation should be committed, the warning against usurpa-

tion is given. The apostle is, by anticipation, barring the way against a spiritual ambition, which would subordinate to itself apostles and prophets, and every office in the Church of God. In that metropolitan city of the Gentile world the equilibrium of Christ's body would be disturbed by a miscreation; one member would become an overgrowth, and the balance of the whole Church would be overthrown. St. Paul would prevent that evil as the Lord guarded against exaggerations connected with his natural relationships. It has so happened, that the evil which the Apostle would have hindered has brought to its consummation that against which the ministry of the Lord was directed.

The double evil would have been kept out of the Church had the exhortation of the epistle been regarded, which enjoins upon all the members of the body to come up to the mark of their high calling. To preserve the equilibrium of the body let all the members have their proper gifts, and exercise them in charity. Let the body be filled with the Spirit of power and of love from its living Head. The Spirit is not for the clergy alone. The cup belongs also to the laity. They have a right to the cup of salvation, for they also are called to be saved. There is one body and one Spirit. The strength of every member is made to depend on the health of the whole, that each might love the whole, and labour not for himself, but for the good of all. Amen.

## XV.

### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—ROM. xii. 16. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. viii. 1.

THE spirit of pride, of self-glorification, and of vindictiveness, is rebuked in the epistle for this day. God's warnings and admonitions have the point and precision which perfect wisdom and knowledge can give. The same things are not said by Him to the Church in Corinth and to the Church in Rome, to the Hebrews and to the Macedonians. His word is exactly suited to the condition of those to whom it is addressed, that it may be indeed "an engrafted word," "saving" the hearers. To the Church in the metropolis of the Western Roman Empire, the Apostle, directed by the Spirit of Truth, writes that which through the Western world should be chiefly needed, and most of all in that very centre and citadel of pride to which his words were first addressed. "Mind not high things," was spoken to those amongst whom Satan was erecting the throne of pride, for the boldest amongst them to occupy. "Be not wise in your own conceits," "*or by yourselves,*" to those whose chief was about to hold the chair of separation, whilst arrogating the attribute of infallibility, which is the reward of the united. "Avenge not yourselves," to those who should antedate Christ's judgment as well as His Kingdom, not leaving it to God to find out the reprobate and impenitent, and to consume them hereafter in the "everlasting burnings" prepared for the first rebel, and for all those in his own nature and in man's who should follow his example; but pronouncing men reprobate even in this world, and kindling around them at present and literally the penal fire. This spirit, which hath already set



up in the West, and shall yet set up more terribly, the throne of pride, the chair of separateness, and the seat of judgment, or rather the tribunal of revenge and persecution, we must be wholly delivered from. And let no man count himself as not needing the exorcism; we have been all born in the tainted atmosphere, and need purgation. May we indeed have changed the air, and found escape from the contagion, by coming again under institutions and ordinances of God, which were appointed by Him to afford liberty of action to His own Spirit of health and purity. This spirit rebuked in the epistle is indeed the leprosy, the loathsome leprosy which is presented to us in the gospel. For what was leprosy? It was distinguished from all other uncleannesses in this, that it permanently excluded those made unclean by it from the camp of God. That which separates men from the communion of the saints, which makes them isolate themselves in pride and fancied wisdom and unforgiving hate, from their brethren, is leprosy. Men show the spirit of cutting themselves off from the Church to be in them first, before God judicially, and finally, separates them from it. In these evil days men have cut themselves off from one another. Churches, so called, have fenced out from themselves all other Churches. Men seem to be conscious of an inability to help one another, yea, rather, of a necessity to defile and debauch one another if they meet; therefore they stand apart. We whom the Lord has taken in hand, that He may teach us to love the Church universal, are we, too, diseased with party spirit? Does the leprosy declare itself in one man who loathes his Protestant brethren? in another who abhors the Papists? In one who can only mingle with High Church indignation, in another who can only sympathise with the sufferings of Dissent? Who can enumerate the many ways in which they who ought to be Catholics become mere sectarians? Let us know our weakness, and imitate the leper in the gospel. Jesus is as willing, yea, if possible, more willing, to cleanse us of this moral leprosy, than the poor leper in the

narrative of his bodily disease. Let us only be as earnest and as straightforward in our prayer for deliverance as he was. In the sequence of the gospel, the cure of paralysis followed the cleansing of the leprosy. How soon in the Church of God would the casting out of the spirit of selfishness and separateness be followed by the recovery of spiritual power? To love all is the pre-requisite for the possession of that power which was meant to labour for the good of all. The Spirit of God is the helper of the body of Christ, not the sealer of any rent in that body. If we could attain to the love of the whole body, the Saviour of the body would have pleasure in us, and could work by us. When we love our brethren, and long to see them all, God, who is the author of that love, will bring about a meeting, and will fill our hands with presents for those towards whom He has filled our hearts with love. But to prevail with God, we must ask in faith as well as out of love. Love may not take liberties and define for itself what and *how* it shall ask from God. We must know who we are before Him, and what He has given us a right to expect at His hands. Thus the centurion prevailed; his way of approach to Jesus, and his mode of addressing Him, proved that he had faith. The Lord commended his faith; yea, it is said, He was astonished at it. Now what did this man? The history of the transaction is in two evangelists, Matthew and Luke. 1st. He sent to Jesus elders of the Jews; thereby he showed his faith that God had put the Jews in that land, and made them His people, from whom salvation should go forth; he put himself, like the Syrophenician woman, behind the Jew, in the order of God. 2nd. He shrank from receiving Jesus under his roof; thereby he testified that the Law was given to the Jew, not to him; the law was given to prepare the way before Messiah. God gave rulers for setting in order the houses of the children of Israel, that the Son of God, visiting the earth in human form, should find houses and families organised and ordered by God to receive Him. The humble Roman,

though high in rank, and in military rank too, said to Jesus in effect, I am an intruder in this land ; I have no Divine right to a house in it. And I have no Divinely-appointed order in my house to greet withal the Heavenly Visitant. His eyes may not be outraged with the confusion of a Gentile's dwelling. What I am part of and am bound up with is not an economy of God, with which God's Messiah can identify Himself. He can only stand for His work on the ground which belongs to God. He can only rest in the chambers where God's purpose is set before Him, by the laws which God has ordained ; where all that His eyes behold are a type, a symbol, a mystic sign of God unto Him, full of meaning, reminding Him of what He came into the world to do. Let Messiah rest under the Jewish roof, it is His own ; and He has that within the Jewish house wherewith He can feed His faith, and excite His reverence. But to me, a Gentile intruder into the land of promise, let the Lord of the land, standing where He is Lord undisputed under the heavens which He made, and on the earth which He separated unto Himself from the rest of the world, send one word of grace ; let Him speak a word of mercy to my house, which shall penetrate its misery and darkness, and heal the sickness which troubles it. And here, 3rdly, the centurion still speaks in faith, when he says, " I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me ; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." He acknowledges Jesus as the Son of Man, into whose hands judgment was committed of God—the Promised Seed who should reverse the curse, who should have power to commission diseases or arrest them, as a Roman centurion commandeth the soldiers under him. Thus he recognised in Jesus the Messiah promised to Israel, and also the Deliverer in whom the Gentiles should trust, whose commission from God to deliver was co-extensive with the curse of death which God had inflicted upon all the race. He saw all these attributes meeting in Jesus, and therefore

he earnestly and intelligently sought unto Him for help ; his prayer was answered and his faith commended, and at the same time the assurance was given, that many such as he should come from the east and from the West, to fill up the places in the Kingdom of God, which the first-called refused to occupy. That number is well-nigh gathered ; the East first yielded up its multitude, and so hath the West : and we who now live, are perhaps amongst the last for whom the door is kept open. Let us hasten to come in before the door be shut, and to fill up the number of those who shall enter. The first Gentiles who entered were commended for their faith ; the last must be like them, as the last believing remnant amongst the children of Israel were like unto the first ; as the Baptist, and Mary, whom all generations call blessed, and Simeon and Anna reproduced the faith of Abraham and the Patriarchs. That it may be so let us come this day unto "the Author and Finisher of faith," that He may perfect us, that we may again receive from Him the flesh which can trust in God, and the life that can serve Him. Amen.

## XVI.

### FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—ROM. xiii. 1. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. viii. 23.

IN the epistles from the Epiphany to this day, the members of the Church are taught how to behave themselves in their Church relationship. The epistle of this day inculcates the duty of Christians towards the civil power. The collect exhibits the Church as in a situation of peculiar trial and difficulty, employing this language, "O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always *stand upright*; Grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations: through Jesus Christ our Lord." The apprehension of not being able to *stand upright* may well fill the heart of the Church when the relation of Christians to the rulers of this world is considered. The rulers of the earth, generally speaking, have done as the Gadarenes in the gospel, have besought Christ to depart from their coasts, and Christians have either suffered banishment with their Lord, or given Him up for the friendship of those who would tolerate them on no other condition; or, on the other hand, the Church, which has in her breast the instinct of rule, who knows that she is a queen by virtue of her union with the King of kings, has sought to exercise her authority before the time, and so has obstructed and troubled the civil power. Society has been disquieted by the two con-

flicting powers, as the sea in which Jesus and His servants were was agitated by the fierce winds. The heavenly and earthly powers, through a misunderstanding or dislike of their several provinces, and an intermeddling in each other's functions [and invasion of each other's rights, have often been subjected to the impulse of evil spirits, like the two victims of the devil's oppression whom the Lord met coming from the tombs. The earth has been swept by terrible storms and tormented by many wicked spirits because of the contentions between the Church and the State, or, still worse, by their ungodly alliance. Well, therefore, might the Church, hearing the call of the Apostle to obedience to the powers that be, cry out unto God, Thou only knowest our *many* and *great* dangers arising out of our difficult position. Nature's frailty cannot stand upright in the midst of these dangers, nor pass safely through all the temptations incidental to it; therefore let us have Thy strength and protection to support us under the dangers and carry us through the temptations.

If the true sense of need prevailed with the Church to cause this collect to be prefixed to this epistle, surely the wisdom of God caused that there should be joined to it that portion of Holy Scripture which constitutes the gospel of this day. In it the Lord is presented to us imposing a law of obedience on the most turbulent creatures in the world of matter and of spirit, on the winds of heaven, the troubled waves of the sea, and legions of evil angels. He who could do so to those wild and outlawed powers of nature can bring into obedience the "unruly wills and affections of sinful men." The creatures outside of which (so to speak) He stood, and to whom He gave a bare command, obeyed His word. Much more shall they in whom He dwells, whom He makes members of Himself, of His body, of "His flesh and of His bones," whom He makes partakers of His will

and of His mind, be obedient to His law. A man's body first of all obeys his mind and volition, and then is the instrument of conveying that mind and volition to others more remote from him. So is the Church first and chiefly to obey the Lord, and then to cause Him to be obeyed. The Lord rebuked His disciples for despondency; they cried out "we perish," although He was in the ship with them. Also for unbelief; they did not know and believe what God had said, otherwise they would have known that Christ was not to be drowned as a shipwrecked sailor, but to die by the sentence of an apostate nation, by the hands of wicked men. He called them to do works which they had not yet done, and they did not believe His promises when they expected their death before any fulfilment of them took place. He rebuked the storm and there was a great calm, and they reached the dry land in peace; and there He gave them to witness a more dreadful storm than they had suffered on the waters, all the powers of man's being in confusion and furious excitement under the goadings and tossings of indwelling devils, not the objects of a tempest from without, but themselves the bearers, the centre, the prison-house of their torment; that storm too He quelled before their eyes, and gave them to see a greater calm than they had experienced on the sea, in the peace and gentleness of the dispossessed sitting at the feet of their Deliverer. The encouragement which the narrative in the gospel adds to the lesson in the epistle and affords to the prayer in the collect is this, that though the rulers of the earth should be as winds let loose, or as men under the impulse of evil spirits, unreasonable, violent, and cruel, still would the Church be enabled to stand upright and walk safely by cleaving to her Head. There seems to be an intended sequence in the order of the miracles related from the Epiphany. 1st. The supply of wine to the

marriage feast, foreshowing the Kingdom of God. 2nd. The cleansing of the leper and the healing of the paralytic, bringing back the outcast to his place and taking away his weakness that he might fill it. 3rd. The helping of His servants gathered around Him and proceeding with Him whithersoever He goeth. The hope is first set forth, and all the intervening obstacles to its enjoyment are removed that we might be filled with confidence and serve with joy. Now, when human society is coming to its last condition of disorder and subjection to the power of Satan, the faithful especially need the comfort contained in the gospel for the day. We believe that in these times of trouble the Lord has chosen servants to learn from Him how the deliverance of God's election upon the earth may be effected, and to labour for Him unto that deliverance. Are we striving to awake the power of the Lord by earnest prayer, or striving to do as well as we can without it? Or giving up in despondency, saying there is no hope? Are we saying in our hearts, Apostolical guidance is no longer to be expected, let us choose a leader for ourselves or do what we can ourselves? The Lord's hand is drawn back perhaps to punish our sinfulness, perhaps to try our constancy. Men are not seen in the places where He set them, at the work which He assigned them. Disappointed hopes force murmurs from the patient. Increased demands and diminished means discourage those who would serve. What shall we do? Shall we yield to fear? Shall any man blame another and commend himself? Let it not be. Let us rather remember how we received that which brought in the beginning and will secure the progress of the Lord's deliverance. God will not fail to reward those who abide in the word of His Son, who sincerely offer themselves to be the living-sacrifice, the reasonable service which our High Priest may present unto God. Oh that we might now one and all



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believe how near He is to us, that we might ask Him to help us as His own flesh and blood, that He might shew in us and by us the meaning of the mystery which we now celebrate in His name! The Church, obedient to her Head, would be so to the civil rulers; the Church disobedient to Christ is proportionately an obstruction and trouble to the rulers of the earth, either directly inciting the subjects to evil or failing to train them to good.

## XVII.

### FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—ROM. xiii. 1, 7. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. viii. 23, 34.

IN the gospel for the day the Lord is presented to us as delivering men from the possession of evil spirits, and giving to the dislodged demons a herd of swine for their habitation. The unclean prohibited animals which had no right to a place in Israel were swept from the land with the wicked spirits, at whose suggestion they were kept there. This double act of the Lord illustrated His final dealing with the covenanted people to whom He came, a dealing of mercy and of judgment: of mercy to a remnant represented by those two men delivered from devils, snatched from the tombs; of judgment on the rest, who loved their own lusts better than the will of God, and becoming unclean as the swine, were given up like them to the occupation of the wicked one, to hosts of evil angels.

The end of Israel's past history (a future history awaits them which shall not end so darkly) is the end of the Christian nations as well. A remnant shall be recovered unto God from the power and possession of the devil, and the rest, as the herd of swine, shall be possessed by the destroyer.

The epistle shews the way of escape for ever from the power of the enemy. There are two armies in the field, one is led by a spirit in rebellion against God, the Head of the other is a Man, the Son of God Himself. They who will obey the Man who is set over the hosts of the living God, and who will honour all men who bear His name, for His sake they shall escape the galling servitude of the wicked

spirit, who worketh in the children of disobedience. God rules the world by men, by men also He guides and keeps His Church. His inner creation and His outward have the same centre, Jesus Christ, God manifest in flesh. Those who regard with reverence that Holy Centre, and move in obedience around it, shall never be torn from their place by the powers of darkness. He whom they serve will "keep them, and none shall pluck them out of His hand."

The Church is the company of those who, first learning to obey, shall afterwards rule. Christ served first, and then arose to the highest place, which He will hold for ever. The body must rise as the Head rose, from obedience to dominion, from serving God in the humbler and smaller matters to the serving of Him in the highest, even in the administration and government of the universe. We serve God now by obeying others for his sake; we shall serve Him in the world to come by ruling all things in the authority of His name. The Church which strives to rule before God's time shall never rule. A harlot's influence over kings whom she bewitches is not genuine rule; the humouring of a beast is after all a species of subjection to him, and these are the only forms of dominion attained to by the disobedient Church; and after these a subjection to Satan, which shall never end. An imperious woman, learning the art of usurpation from an evil spirit who first set the example of the sin in the midst of the creation of God, is the emblem of the Church which has departed from the fear of the Lord. The epistle for this day was specially given to preserve us from this sin.

Obedience is not servility to tyrants and obsequiousness to the brutal, who may be in possession of the place of rule. It is homage rendered unto God, from whom all power proceeds. The powers that be are ordained by Him. The rulers are His servants, by whom He carries on the public business of the world; they are His deacons, by whom He commends and befriends those who do good, by whom He executes

wrath upon those that do evil. The rulers are not the servants of the public whom the public voice must instruct and the public purse support; they are God's servants, by whom he cares for the public, and to whom, as employed by Him, the public revenues must be paid that their hands may be furnished for their work. Rulers are God's gift, His highest gift in the world. If the people accept the ruler as God's ordinance, and pray for Him as God's instrument, then will they be made to experience by many blessings enjoyed and many miseries escaped that God has indeed to do with their rulers, and that in obeying them they are serving Him.

When the people call the rulers their servants, then is God tempted to cease from endowing rulers for their task. Why should He adorn a world which another than He has created? If the kings are your ordinances, oh people, then strengthen what you have ordained, and make them equal to their duties. If you cannot give them power do not pretend to give them authority. Acknowledge that power is from God, and then you will in earnest pray that the power which exists may behave itself in a manner worthy of Him from whom it has come. Why is Government weak, unwise, imbecile amongst the nations? Because its root is not seen in God, its efficiency and success are not sought from Him. In this evil day, when the cry filled the earth that the people are the legitimate source of all authority and power, God began to work for the re-establishment of true foundations. He has shewn us the "power that is," from whence all other power is derived. That power is a person, not an aggregate, small or great. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Let us strive to obey Him, to see Him represented in every ruler, and to receive from every ruler what He can give. Let us see Him as He saw God everywhere. And that we may have His discernment let us now partake of His fulness. Amen.

## XVIII.

### SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

(FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH AFTER PENTECOST.)

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*Ep.*—COL. iii. 12. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xiii. 24.

IN the epistle for this day God's Church is described by its marks which it had from eternity, and by those which during its time condition it receives; and in the gospel it is contrasted with the company of the reprobate who are mingled with it, until the day of eternal separation by the judgment of God. There are in the epistle three eternal marks of the Church, elect, holy, beloved, chosen by God the Father from everlasting, to be consecrated to His service especially, above all His other creatures; and to be so consecrated not merely as instruments by whom His will is accomplished, but as those to whom in the most intimate manner is vouchsafed the fruition of His love. God's choice of them, His holy purpose to be wrought out by them, His love towards them, are the strong foundations of their blessedness who are found in Christ, and have fled to Him as "the Name of the Lord who is the strong tower, into which the righteous enter and are safe."

What are the true marks of God's election? In the preceding part of the chapter from which the epistle is taken, we are warned against spurious marks; in the language before us the true are enumerated. The spurious marks are imitations of things which the Church finds upon the earth; the true are those which flow into the body from its Head in Heaven.

You are not called, says the Apostle, to be Greeks or Jews, to be Barbarians or Scythians, to be bond or free. The

Church of Christ must not make itself like a Jewish society, nor affect the Greek character, nor borrow grotesqueness and extravagance from Barbarians, nor savageness and severity from the Scythians; it must not strive to make itself look like a herd of slaves, nor think that holiness consists in being free and independent. Outward conformity to any of those conditions must not be regarded as the distinction of His people which God's eye loves to look upon. The Spirit of God here intimates the many forms of spurious holiness which should prevail in the visible Church, where fanaticism should clothe itself with one strange garment after another; and after repudiating beforehand the odious counterfeits, commends the true beauty with which the Lamb's wife should be adorned.

Put on *mercy*, to begin with; the first attribute in God which brought deliverance to yourselves: as those who have found mercy, show mercy. Mercy was shown to you undeserving, show mercy to the miserable and undeserving, and add to mercy *kindness*. Be not contemptuous towards those who have been the objects of your mercy. God has not despised afterwards those to whom He first showed mercy; but after treating them mercifully, abounded to them in acts of kindness and bountifulness. He did not merely break the fetter from the rebellious slave, but afterwards made him His dear child. Those whom He pardoned in His mercy, upon them He poured down His choicest gifts. After kindness is mentioned *humility*, for nothing is so calculated naturally to make us high-minded and haughty, as the consciousness that we had much to give, and have given much. Men generally rule as tyrants over those whom they have befriended. Humility is followed in the enumeration by *meekness*. Meekness does not seek its kingdom yet, and therefore does not want to build its house of pride. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" they cannot be humble who are seeking their portion before the Kingdom of their Lord. To meekness is added *long-suffering*, which shall try it to the

uttermost. Moses was the meekest of men, yet even he failed in long-suffering, who smote the rock twice, when he should only have spoken to it once, and said, in the bitterness of his heart, to the people, "Hear, now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of the rock?" That long-suffering has two forms, *forbearance* and *forgiveness*: one exercised towards those with whom we are in danger of coming in collision; the other towards those from whom the injury has already been received. Forbearance turns aside from the deadly strife, forgiveness heals the wounds which the strife has inflicted. "And above all these things put on *charity*, which is the bond of perfectness." Let all these dispositions be the genuine expressions of love, not the efforts of pride in its moods of moral elevation and virtue. God loved us first, and then did all the rest. Let us first love, then all the other qualities will come to us unforced, as water from a living well or juices through a living plant. Thus far the Church in its relation earthward, in its many aspects of blessing towards the children of men. To all this is added still a threefold character towards God. First, "Let the peace of God rule in your heart, to the which ye are also called in one body." Let the peace of God sit within your heart as judge, as umpire. Whatever is needed to keep peace with God let that be done, and the peace with God is broken when the unity of His Church is broken. God cannot be at peace with men whilst He sees not amongst them that which He has set up in the midst of them to be the dwelling-place of His glory and the centre of their light and salvation. If we will enjoy the peace of God we must be members of one body. War against God is proclaimed when anything is spoken or done having for its direct tendency to break the organisation of God's Church and to separate from one another the members of the body of Christ. Therefore keep peace with God; let the determination to be at peace with God settle every difficulty and resolve every question. And the way to keep at peace with Him is to keep as far as in you lies

holy unity in His Church. If you would keep peace with Him as a father, love His family. If you would be at peace with Him as king, violate not that which He calls His city and palace. If you would be at peace with Him as God, labour to preserve for Him His temple inviolate. Where peace with God is kept by the unity of His Church being preserved, there can the word of Christ dwell richly, and in all wisdom, and for all holy purposes of edification and worship in the Church. Into the well-compacted and clean vessel the water of life and the wine of the Kingdom can be abundantly and safely poured. The word of truth and power and infallible guidance abounds in the Church according as the conditions are observed of keeping peace with God by unity amongst each other. Some say infallibility is an attribute of God's Church; why should they not also say that impeccability is an attribute of it as well? The preservation from error and the preservation from sin go hand in hand. Grant that the wicked know what is true and have the power to utter it as well. Is it certain that they will do so? Will not the moral perverseness mar ministerial faithfulness? Evil workers will ignore the parts of truth which their practice violates, they will suppress or adulterate the doctrine which condemns their ways. Therefore Christ first would give us His moral image, then would He intrust to us His truth to guard, and His spirit wherewith to guard it. The third mark of the Church towards God is that it should offer to Him continual eucharist in the name of the Lord Jesus. The one body filled with the Spirit comes before God, not with its unity and its gifts, as the offering for His altar, but with the Lamb that was slain once for all. Attaining to its unity, filled with its gifts, it reverently and humbly approaches God, bearing the signs of the passion and death of His Son, the foundation and well-spring of all the blessings which have been received, and which ever can come to us. Thus are set forth in the epistle the many marks of the election of God. The gospel sums up all in the figure of the wheat and the garner. They are



God's harvest for which He has built his storehouse. Whatever be the storehouse they are the treasure. The glory of the barn is the wheat that fills it. Brethren, may we all be found grains in that heap. Let us search ourselves that the evil marks of the tares be not ours. Those evil marks are summed up by the Lord under two heads, "things that offend," and "those who work iniquity," those who begin by causing offence and end in establishing lawlessness.

Christianity is first misrepresented, then it is cast away. Christ is not allowed liberty to work, and then He is pronounced impotent to save. The corrupted Christianity of one age is the full-grown apostacy from Christianity of another. Infidelity is superstition run to seed. God save us from both, through the partaking of the flesh and blood of His Son, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory evermore. Amen.

## XIX.

### SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—COL. iii. 12. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xiii. 34.

To those who were striving to make themselves like angels, to fathom the depths of wisdom, and to perfect themselves by severest discipline (see the features of the 2nd chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians all through), the words just read in the epistle for the day were full of special meaning. They were reminded that they did not choose God, but that He chose them, that the way of their sanctification was of Him, and that by His sanctification He would make them fit to enjoy His love and able to render unto Him the return of love for ever. They are called off from all ambitions and extravagant strivings after personal distinction and individual excellence, from all lustings after selfish enjoyment of the invisible and supernatural, to labour for the unity of the body, and through the unity of the body to attain to the peace of God. The wisdom which through philosophy they were striving to gain, would flow into them and fill them by the word of Christ dwelling in them richly, and instead of the work and worship of angels which they were dreaming about, they would do the works of Christ and render His worship, they would approach God's altar and throne in a procession which no angel should head up but the Son of God Himself; and whatsoever they should do in word or deed should be in His name done, and through Him carried into God's presence and unto God acceptably offered.

To those cumbered about many things which curious

and mischievous teaching was bringing before them, God's one thing needful was plainly spoken. One thing God calls for; He will have no rest, He will allow none others to have rest until He get it: that object which He has chosen from eternity, which He has set apart in His councils to honour Him with service, to satisfy Him with love. He longs to see it, to use it, and to enjoy it. That one object is the body of Christ, that body which shall be employed by God throughout eternity in a way that no other creatures can be made use of, in ways and for ends surpassing all present definite thought; which during its employment shall never be disturbed, obstructed, put out, or put back; which is called to do God's work, and while doing it to enjoy His peace. Israel of old, brought out of captivity, planted in the land of delights, occupied in serving God according to a ritual and law prescribed by Himself, and enjoying, while serving Him, perfect exemption from all disturbance, peace within all their borders, peace over the whole field of their high and glorious labour, were the type of the Church, raised and glorified, serving God specially in the midst of the universe, and preserved by God from every influence that could disturb their labour or hinder their success.

God is pleased with those who learn what He wants, and who labour to bring unto Him the instrument which He is waiting for, to find it for Him, and to make it ready for His hand. The way of effecting this double object is shown in the epistle, namely, how to gather the Church, and how to perfect it. If you would gather men together, put on the qualities which attract them; mercy to begin with: because the first thing that meets you in the world, which all creatures enter with the cry of distress in the pangs of birth, and leave with the groan of pain in the agony of death, is misery. Draw together the miserable by your heart of mercy; supplement your mercy by kindness; mere almsgiving relieves distress, but rebukes and frowns upon the suppliant. Put on

kindness, easiness of access ; let the countenance smile while the hand helps ; do not put your gift under your own foot first, and then, with the mark of debasement upon it, in your neighbour's bosom ; but let mercy from within you go forth from you through the gate of kindness, and add to kindness humbleness of mind. Let your kindness be humility arising for an honour, and not pride condescending to a humiliation. And how shall humbleness of mind be permanent, and not fitful ? If it be preserved, it must be by the meekness which springs from the knowledge that our portion is not yet, and is therefore indifferent to the things which puff up those who are lusting to be great where Christ was crucified. And meekness must expect to be heavily taxed by God's delays, and by man's perverseness. The meek must suffer long, till the mountains of hindrance between them and their inheritance be taken out of the way. And mercy and meekness, and all the rest, in order to be genuine, must spring from love. God is merciful and kind, and meek and gracious, and long-suffering towards us, not because we are in circumstances which need such treatment, but because He loves us ; all His other attributes are but moods of His love. If we will not imitate Him in loving, He will not thank us for our mercy and pity, and gentle manners and humble carriage, and quiet demeanour, and peaceful disposition. Love is the bond of perfectness, the tying together of the two things which makes a work perfect, the worthy motive with the right performance. All the other qualities enumerated, do in their operation make the life of society peaceful ; love fills it with joy unspeakable. They are all streams of gladness ; love is the fountain of bliss. They are occasional emanations ; love is the perennial source from which in this dispensation flows what this dispensation needs, and which, with exhaustless abundance, shall ever supply what the changing circumstances of endless ages shall successively demand. Brethren, it is this heart of love, with its many-handed helpfulness, that shall attract to you the scattered members of God's election ;

it shall save you from setting up your own passion or interest to decide upon your course of action towards your brethren, but shall make the peace of God the umpire; shall make you desire in your heart, and speak with your lips, and work in your lives, all that God's peace requires; all that is needful not only to gather the body, but to keep it when gathered in the peace of God for His holy use.

But how shall it be fitted for His use? What shall make that gathered, united, peaceful society an instrument for His praise? "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and in all wisdom." Be filled with God's word rightly understood, well digested, well balanced.

God's word coming to you as the "word of Christ," spoken to you by Christ, explained to you by Christ, made spirit and life unto you by coming from Christ, from the Anointed One, who spake all His words and wrought all His works in the Spirit of God, who baptiseth His Church with the Holy Ghost, who sendeth not men merely to teach, but men anointed; who putteth not creeds and confessions merely and catechisms into the memory, but a living word into the heart to dwell there. He who dwells in a place occupies it, fills it, lives and moves in it. So the word of Christ (the word of God coming to you as the word of Christ) is to dwell in you, richly and yet wisely, abundant in supply, skilful in arrangement, not filling you merely as furniture fills a warehouse, but furnishing you as the same furniture furnishes for use and ornament the palace of a king. The Church united, yea by love itself, dwelling in peace, even in the peace of God which passeth understanding, is still weak for self-edification and for Divine service unless the "word of Christ dwell" in it; its power of adequately expressing itself man-ward and God-ward is in that word. Dry texts, dead traditions, barren pictures, do well enough where the silence of death is not to be broken or the repose of spiritual sloth to be indulged; but if man is to be searched, cleansed, comforted, and edified, if God is to be worshipped

and praised, then the "word of Christ must dwell in us richly in all wisdom."

And lastly, the Church thus morally disposed, thus spiritually endowed, what is its main work towards God? That which is twice insisted upon in the epistle, first, "be ye thankful," secondly, "giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him."

To make our Eucharist before God in a double fashion, first in speech and act, which are done in the name of the Lord Jesus; secondly, in formal presentation of Himself before God to sum up all thanksgiving and praise. God accepts the Eucharist so offered; He looks down from Heaven upon our altars and our worshipping assemblies, that He may see two things and be satisfied: first, the body of Christ, His mystical body, His Church filled with the Spirit of Christ, standing before Him in the name of the Lord Jesus, serving in the power of Christ, yet not serving that power, but the Lord Jesus from whom it comes; and secondly, the sacramental body in the hand of the living body, a perpetual memorial of the alone worthiness of the risen Head, who was dead and is alive, and is alone within the veil, and accepted, and all others in Him. The Church filled with the Spirit comes boldly into God's presence to cry, Abba, Father; but she carries in her hand and sets forth before the Lord another's merit as the ground of her confidence. Let God behold this double spectacle, which fills heaven with joy and wonder, in the midst of us this day, that our coming together may indeed not be in vain, but for our everlasting blessedness and God's exceeding glory. Amen.

## XX.

### SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

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*Ep.*—I ST. JOHN, iii. 1, 8. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xxiv. 23, 31.

THE epistle refers to the first seduction practised in the Christian Church, the gospel to the last that shall be attempted. The first was an endeavour to cheat men out of holiness, which is the preparation for the Kingdom, the second shall be an attempt to make men take up with a delusive Millennium instead of the Kingdom of Christ.

John, inculcating holiness, says, "Let no man deceive you." Christ, speaking of His coming again, says that false Christs shall arise to deceive if it were possible the very elect. As the Church approaches the time when the victory of her Head over all temptation in the wilderness is commemorated, these first and last attempts to mislead are brought before those who are to follow Him in His temptations and to overcome by His might. Christ's first warning to His disciples was against Antinomianism (see Sermon on the Mount). The beginning of the corruption of Christianity was the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, the doctrines came after. John's repeated declarations that the end of God's law and the object of the mission of His Son were the destruction of sin, seem to us remarkable; we wonder that he should assert a thing so self-evident, that he should repeat such a truism. Yet his whole epistle shows that he is answering some false teachers who were leading men into the notion that Christianity had something else for its end than the delivery of men from sin. He answers those who professed to know God and to have seen Him, to be possessed of profound

knowledge of Him, to have had glorious visions of Him, and yet were systematically sinning and contending that such sinning upon principle and the profession of Christianity were quite compatible with each other. That any heretic should ever have broached such a theory appears very strange, yet practically the absurdity has prevailed and does prevail. None, perhaps, are sufficiently aware to what an extent they themselves make the means and circumstantialia of Christianity its end and its essence. Whole divisions of Christendom do virtually make the doctrines of Christianity its end, and others more numerous make the Christian religion a round of fêtes and ceremonies and spectacles. Doctrines, sacraments, ministries are made the end, instead of ways to the end. The manifestation of Christ was not the end even of His coming into the world. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil, his works are sin, he sinneth from the beginning, and he that committeth sin is of the devil.

False prophets sin in two ways, by promising a share in Christ's Kingdom when He comes to those who, mayhap, are taught to trust in His finished work, as they say, and His imputed righteousness, but are not delivered from sin by His power; and by promising to the saints their Millennium upon the earth before the Lord's return and God's judgment upon that which has been defiled. The world which knew not the saints at first will never know them. Men will gain the friendship of the world by treachery to Christ, and that friendship will be called the world's conversion and the Church's triumph.

It has not yet been manifested what we shall be, nor shall it be manifested till we be like Him, till we shall have seen Him as He is, and been made like Him as He now is, till we shall be raised from the dead or changed for the Kingdom. Those who shall suppose that Christ has come again, though their bodies meanwhile remain unchanged, are deceived by the false Christs.



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Those who shall be delivered from the first delusion spoken of in the epistle shall be delivered from the second referred to in the gospel, and only such; therefore are they connected. To those who yield to the Lord in His present working of holiness, to them will He make known His working, to manifest His glory which shall afterwards be.

## XXI.

### SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

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*Ep.*—I COR. ix. 24. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xx. 1.

THE parable of the householder and labourers was addressed by the Lord to His disciples. It arose out of a question put to the Lord by Peter, when a rich man whom Jesus called to follow Him went away from Him sorrowful on account of his great possessions. Peter said, We who have not refused Thy call, but have forsaken all things to follow Thee, what shall we have? The Lord's answer assured Peter and all the disciples that their services should not go unrewarded, and that every one who in the present life should make sacrifices for Christ's sake, should in the regeneration find an abundant recompense. But He added to His answer this parable, to give them some additional information, and to guard them against falling into temptation on the subject of their services and the rewards which should be bestowed upon them. He showed them that the reward would not be entirely according to the outward appearance of the service; that they were hired by a strange master whom they could not entirely understand, who would give a whole day's wages for a single hour's work, who would take into account other considerations than the mere amount of work performed and the mere amount of time spent in the field. The parable taught them that God would reward not merely the number of services performed by men, but the confidence and alacrity with which they should accede to His overtures when presented to them. He may give to one man circumstances and opportunities favourable to the production of a great many positive results, and withhold from another these advantages,

and yet see an equal readiness and willingness to serve Him in the man whose opportunities are few as in him to whom they abound. The labourer who closed with the householder's offer at the beginning of the day, engaging to give a whole day's labour for a whole day's wages, did well, accepting and submitting to the master's terms. The labourer who hired later in the day, and went into the field not allured by the prospect of a full day's wages, but encouraged by confidence in the master's fairness, did well also. An idle man at the eleventh hour might excuse himself by saying, It is not worth while to go into the field for an hour, the reward will not be worth receiving. But a man willing to work, and confiding in his employer, would argue differently. He would say, My master is worthy that I should do his will. His will is that I should go into the field. I will go into it, although my time of leaving it shall have come immediately after my time of entering it. I will comply with his desire, and trust to him for all the rest. The man hired in the first hour was told distinctly what he might expect at the close of the day. The men hired later knew not exactly what to expect, but their confidence in their employer was as much, if not more, called forth than that of the first who was hired. The Lord taught the lesson that what God wanted of men was not a long service, but an entire consecration. The man at the eleventh hour yielded the latter as much as the man hired at the first hour; he trusted in Him who called him, the first called did no more. He who trusted performed by trusting the acceptable service. He followed Abraham, who believed in God, and his faith in God was accounted for righteousness. The great matter is to be hired by the Master of the vineyard, to go into His vineyard when commanded by Him, and not to run unbidden. We are warned in the parable against dwelling too much upon our own sacrifices and services. The more real and extensive such have been, the greater is the danger of poring over them. It will produce a grudging and illiberal spirit towards others, whose claims we shall

regard as not so great as our own. It was those who were called to the highest place who were first warned not to think too much of their own services, not to compare themselves with others apparently less privileged. And the whole Church is warned against judging in an exaggerated and exceptional way concerning the calling and work of the first apostles, as if they were employed in services with which nothing that should come after them could by any possibility be compared or put in competition.

The sin of self-glorification is nowhere more condemned than in the epistle for the day. It was the sin of those to whom the Apostle Paul wrote the epistle. He learned a different lesson. He did not exalt himself above others, but he kept down himself. This must all do, and it is hard to do it. Many are called, but few are chosen. Many are called, but the work to which they are called is hard. They evade it or give it up as hopeless. "Let us make our calling and election sure." How shall we do so? Let him to whom the words were spoken, "many are the called, few are the elect," instruct us: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful (workless, nor fruitless) in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be abundantly ministered unto you into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." They who do these things shall learn from God Himself that they are called and chosen by Him, and they shall have an abundant entrance into His Kingdom when it appears. There is no other way of obtaining assurance of our election. We are elected to

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holiness. Holiness is the preparation for the Kingdom. God has called and chosen some. By getting that to which men are called, for which they have been chosen, we learn that we are amongst those called and chosen ones, and learning that we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory at the appearing and Kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, be all honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## XXII.

### SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

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*Ep.*—I COR. ix. 24. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xx. 1.

THERE are two figures in the epistle, one of the race, the other of the conflict. The race teaches us that we must press forward to the end of our high calling; the conflict shows how we are to deal with the obstructions that would stop us on our way or turn us aside from our course. In a race it is not mere running that is seen, but running to a goal, running for a prize, running within a prescribed course and according to rules appointed. St. Paul wrote to men who seemed to be running. They were full of spiritual force and displayed it exultingly. He needed to say to them, "I run not as *uncertainly*." This does not mean, I run as one who must certainly win. It means, I run as one whose running manifests a purpose, whose running is significative. All running does not suggest the idea of a race; there is a wild running to and fro, backward and forward, in all directions. This signifies nothing but strength and wantonness, and confusion and aimlessness.

"I run not *uncertainly*." My life is not only earnest and real, but it has an end before it, which God who gave it has proposed; a goal to reach which He has set up, a prize to receive which when the goal is reached He will bestow.

When the Corinthians exercised their gifts and powers, it seemed as if they did so to please themselves, not to edify the Church, not to bear witness for the Kingdom of God and the Lordship of Christ.

So run that ye may obtain. Run indeed, but run the race that is set before you. Many run *from* the race that is set before them, choosing their own course. In another place it

is written, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." That is, I began, continued, and came to the end of my race as one not choosing for himself, but as one believing another. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that *love His appearing,*" to *all that have loved His epiphany*, to all who loved and received joyfully every manifestation of Christ in their behalf. I trusted in Him, said Paul, by every name in which He was made known to me. By the grace of God I followed Him whithersoever He led. Doing this I did the right thing and shall be crowned as one that did right; and every one of you in the Church who loves the light which Christ has given, and who follows that light, shall receive the same crown. The grace of God that brings salvation hath shone upon you, and you have loved it and have yielded to it. You have trusted in Christ, not for some things, but for all the good things which God sent unto you by Him. You trusted in Him for acceptance with God; you trusted in Him for power to serve God; you trusted in Him for deliverance from all the enemies who hate God and would hinder His Kingdom from appearing, and His will from being done. You, began, continued, and ended the life of faith. You believed in Christ that you might be justified. You believed in Him that you might be sanctified. You believed in Him that you might be glorified. You accepted Him as Head of the Church, as Saviour of the body. You called Him Lord. You hoped for His coming in glory to receive the reward of His coming in humiliation. You rejoiced to hear of every interposition of the Lord Christ in behalf of the fallen race and the ruined creation. You received Him whom God sent, therefore you did the work of God, and for him who works the work of God the reward of God is reserved. For him who, having no righteousness, received the Righteous One, the crown of righteousness is prepared.

The figure of the race shows us how we are to labour for the end ; that of the conflict, how we are to deal with the hindrances. "I run not as uncertainly," as one going nowhere. "I fight not as one that beateth the air," as one making a display of powers, but not applying them. The language of the epistle shows that the chief enemy to be contended with is oneself. "I keep under my body and make it serve." The service of the man originates in his will, it is perfected in his body. The spirit of selfishness would withdraw the body from service. Religion is not in the spirit alone, nor in the mind, it is also to be expressed in the body. Present your bodies a living sacrifice, this completes the "reasonable service." Having your bodies washed with pure water, hold fast the confession of your hope. Let it be seen that your bodies are partakers with the soul of the glorious hope ; that they were made not merely for eating and drinking and sleeping, for wearing gay apparel and surfeiting themselves with pleasure and self-indulgence in the natural condition ; but that they were made in order that in due time they might appear in the Kingdom of God, and do service therein. If our bodies, hereafter, are to witness for Christ as for Him who raiseth the dead, now are they to witness for Him that He condemneth sin in flesh, and maketh the fallen, notwithstanding all its downward and evil tendencies, to rise and stand before God, receiving His commands to go forth from His presence to do His will ; yea, His good, and acceptable, and perfect will. God's victory over us is achieved in our will and mind, but it is made manifest in our bodies. The gospel of the day shows us that it is not the multitude of performances merely that God will reward, but the entire subjugation to Him to which we shall have attained. It is not safe for any to be poring over past performances. To know the present work and to love it, to know the blessing which is coming, which hath been promised, and to press into it, this is acceptable to God and safe for us, To strengthen His servant who was in prison



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the Lord recalled not to His memory the wonderful things in His history, but He said, See what the Sent of God is at this time doing, and take by violence the Kingdom which He is bringing in. What is past will bear in due time its harvest of joy and blessedness to those who are accepting God's present grace, and pressing into His future and quickly coming glory. Amen.

## XXIII.

### SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

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*Ep.*—II COR. xi. 19. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE viii. 4.

THE services of this season of the year are directed by the Church against spiritual sloth. Both the epistle and gospel of this day show how hardly shall even the righteous be saved, not that any may despair, but that all may avail themselves of all the help which they can obtain to secure to themselves the victory. Jesus was surrounded by a multitude of hearers. Comparatively few of them would hear unto profit, because of defects in themselves. The sower was the same to all, so was the seed. The difference was in the ground. Every one, therefore, should consider what soil illustrated his own character, and should seek to have removed the hindrance in his own case. If he was the hearer represented by the hard and trampled-down earth, who, while he was hearing, would give up to the accuser, to the hater, to the wicked one, what he was hearing, then he would seek to be delivered from the accusatory spirit which opened the way for the devil, from the ill-grained, churlish, impracticable, thwarting spirit which laid him open to Satan, the hater and the hinderer, from the propensity to wicked and sinful courses which made him easy to be cheated out of his blessing by the wicked one. The hearer described by the shallow mould covering the rock, who would have his season of faith when it involved no sacrifice and would forsake the truth when it provoked against him the world's contempt or hatred, would seek to have the rock broken within him, the stony self-love taken away, which rendered him so sensitive to every attack from without

which menaced his selfish interests and his worldly importance. The hearer set forth under the figure of the ground overgrown with thorns, which would rob the corn at its root of the nourishment from the earth, and shut out its head from the light and air of heaven, would be taught to subject his heart to husbandry, to patient and rigorous discipline, that the accursed roots might be destroyed, that the flesh might be burned up with its affections and lusts. Christ warned all His hearers of the threefold enemy, the devil, the world, and their own fallen nature; that escaping from these they might find their place in one or another of the three classes which constitute the good ground, the ground which brings forth thirty, or sixty, or even a hundred fold. Two things are laid upon the heart of the Church by this parable of the sower; first, the necessity that the ground should be prepared for the seed which the Son of Man sows; second, the importance of knowing what the seed is, that it and nothing else may be committed to the prepared earth. There are two classes, those who are always as it were preparing the ground, but never sowing the right seed, and those who suppose that in the seed itself there is a conquering energy which ensures an abundant harvest to the sower wheresoever he may have scattered it. "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine," was said to a servant of God in the beginning. It is said to the whole Church, to every one of us, until the last of the elect be gathered. See to it that you be in a right condition and that that gospel to which you give your confidence be the true gospel. God has given us all advantages for the attainment of this double end. Baptised in our infancy that we might from the very beginning of our existence be under the influence of the Spirit of life, and surrounded in childhood and youth by all His institutions and means of blessing, disciplined in the Christian family and living in the midst of Christian civilisation, we ought to be brought into the possession of the "good and honest heart." These words, "good and honest" are the very terms in which the ancient philosophers

described the moral excellence which wise men should aim at, the *το καλον* and the *το αγαθον*, the fair and the good, fair in its aspect, good in its substance. Into the heart made "fair and good" the precious seed is cast, and from the commingling of both God receives His harvest of glory. They who used the Jewish law aright were made fit thereby for the Gospel seed. Yea, those who followed out fairly the maxims and precepts of the Greek philosophy, and sought earnestly to be schooled and disciplined in Roman virtue, underwent thereby a moral preparation for the doctrine of Christ soon to be brought unto them; and the love of liberty joined to the respect for headship, the chastity and manliness of the ancient Germans prepared them to come next after Greeks and Romans to receive the "word of the Kingdom." The whole discipline of God with individuals and with communities of men has this end and object, to produce in them the "good and honest heart," to which He can commit His word, upon which He can lay His charges. The constitution and government under which a people live, the social habits and discipline which prevail amongst them, are not unimportant; they are means by which God delivers the land from the wayside, trodden-down condition, from the shallow and rocky state, from the impracticableness of the weeds and thorns. Some nations, by the way in which they have been treated from generation to generation, have become almost unable and unfit to receive the doctrines of the Gospel; like the earth so impoverished by long-continued mismanagement that its power of fecundity is lost and the good seed is scattered over it in vain. Other nations, on the contrary, have been so circumstanced that their outward condition has been a very training of them for Christ, the court of their earthly ruler being made to them a vestibule to the temple of their God. Amongst them the seed is sown in hope, and "hope maketh not ashamed," when the return of the sowing is seen, thirty, and sixty, and an hundred fold. Those who love man and desire the honour and glory of God, should

live and labour for two things in their day and generation, first, that every means should be employed for the production of the "good and honest heart;" secondly, that that heart, so prepared, should be filled with the "word," as, according to St. Mark, Jesus calls the seed; "with the word of God," according to St. Luke; the "word of the Kingdom," according to St. Matthew; the "word which reveals the character of God, that all may love Him, and shows His purpose, that they may labour for Him." Amen.

## XXIV.

### QUINQUAGESIMA.

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*Ep.*—I COR. xiii.    *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xviii. 31.

“COVET earnestly the best gifts, and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” A way supposes an end. God hath an end which He has proposed, and which we should desire; and He hath a way in which we should walk, from which we should never turn aside. God’s end is to rule the world in righteousness, by His Son, and by the Church, which is His body. His way to that end is by perfecting the Head of the Church first, and then the Church through union with Him. The first part of the work is done, the second part is now proceeding. God is drawing into one the members of Christ; He is knitting them together unto their Head and unto one another. His way of effecting this object is twofold, by the exercise of His spiritual gifts, which He bestows upon His children, and by the operation of His love, which He kindles within them. St. Paul taught the Church concerning this way of God, first by enumerating the spiritual gifts and their use, and then by defining, enlarging upon, and inculcating charity. The gifts of the Holy Ghost draw together, unite, and perfect the body of Christ; so does love, and more abundantly; it attracts, it holds, it never forsakes; it labours, and continues to labour, for the ultimate blessedness of all. I have shown you, he says, the way in which you should walk; I show it unto you still more and more. Retain and exercise the gifts of the Holy Ghost; abound in love, which is the very life of God. He commends the endowments of life, but more highly does he commend the life itself. God would preserve all His

children from the repining and murmuring spirit ; He would fill all with peace ; therefore He most highly exalts that which all have in common. All have not high gifts, but all must love. Gifts are limited, love is universal. It is the way of human vanity to exult in that which is exceptional ; we are called to rejoice more in that which is held by all in common. God loves His Church ; and He loves the world which His Church shall rule ; He loves His heirs, and He loves their inheritance. So are we called to love the sons of God, and to love the creation which shall attain to its liberty and blessedness in the day of their manifestation.

The Spirit of Christ is given unto us to reveal unto us how God doth love "to shed abroad His love in our hearts," and to teach us and enable us to become followers of God, as dear children, and to walk in love. Yea, He who maketh us to know the love of God and the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, is able also to kindle within our breasts a love which embraceth God Himself, His elect, and His whole creation ; a love which cannot be quenched ; a love by which all trials and sufferings for righteousness sake can be endured ; "As it is written, For Thy sake are we killed all the day long : we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or péril, or sword ?" The spirit of love has given power to Christ's witnesses to persevere in the faith amidst such sufferings. He has borne them through them all, and made them more than conquerors through Him that loved them, whose love is like Himself, immeasurable, as again it is written : "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This love shall endure as long as there is a God to rule in love, and a people to render unto Him love's willing service. Love is of God. In

the fulness of time God sent His Son to manifest the Divine love. Christ bore upon Him the sin of the world; He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. We, who are baptised into Christ, are to do good out of love unto all men, and especially to those who are our brethren in Him,—to those who are of the household of faith. Love came into the world to save; love still laboureth to save, and not to destroy.

If you would save the Church, said the Apostle, by all means exercise for its edification the Heavenly gifts; but, above all, remember the body must edify itself in love. How does he labour that love should be genuine. By how many marks does he test it? In the best things counterfeits are most dangerous. “Love is long-suffering and kind” to those who cause it to suffer. Man’s passion is overbearing, and inflicts mischief and injury upon those who withstand it. “Love envieth not;” it rejoices in the distinctions which God has made, and prays that God’s will may be done. “Love vaunts not itself; it is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly.” Love honours the distinctions which God has set, but aims not at distinguishing itself by affectations and fopperies and unseemly manifestations, which almost give envy an excuse for its fault-findings. “Love seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil;” renounces selfishness and irritability and plottings of evil. “Love rejoices in what is righteous,” wherever it is found, and has all its sympathies with truth. “Charity beareth all things, believeth all things; hopeth all things, endureth all things;” under all circumstances love is patient and trustful, and hopeful and enduring. “Love never fails;” it never becomes obsolete or falls into disuse; it is not like power, which hath its seasons, *it* is always in season. With faith and hope, and greater than they, it shall abide for ever; out of the heart of love the exercise of faith and hope shall ever proceed; faith and hope shall be as it were the wings of love for ever.

May He who came down from Heaven in perfect love from



perfect love, who manifested on the earth Divine and perfect charity, who performeth the labour of love still from the right hand of God, who poured out in the beginning upon His body the spirit of love, may He work in His Church now this His Divine likeness ! Herein, indeed, is His almighty power to be seen. After all the works of God which He hath wrought, this mightiest work of all, the Church made perfect in love, carried forward to its regeneration, remains to be seen. May it soon be seen unto the glory of God, unto the filling of the universe, with His praise ! The epistle contains the high praise of love, the gospel the wondrous example of it. To know our mission and to fulfil it, that is the work of love. The Son of God going up to Jerusalem, to suffer all that was written concerning Him, is the fact which the Church connects with the Apostle's commendation of love. Three times emphatically He told His disciples He should suffer and die : 1st, when they confessed Him by Peter's mouth to be Christ, the Son of the Living God ; 2nd, when they witnessed His transfiguration ; 3rd, when they heard of the glory reserved in the world to come for those who should forsake all to follow Him. In the way of His manifestation as the Son and Christ of God, in the way of the glory which the transfiguration foreshadowed, in the way of the reward of His followers in His Kingdom, was raised the cross, which He hastened to endure, leaving us the example that we should endure all things out of love to God, and desire for the accomplishment of His will. Amen.

## XXV.

### QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

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*Ep.*—I COR. xiii. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE, xviii. 31.

“God is love.” Whatsoever other attributes He has displayed from the beginning of all things, His assumption of a creature form, and His presence amongst the children of men as one of themselves, as the “Son of Man,” hath been for the manifestation of Love. Because God loved the world, He sent His only begotten Son into the world that all might be saved who should put their trust in Him. Christ loves us with a love which “may be known, and yet passeth knowledge;” the love of God, of God revealed, and yet infinite. Christ has shown us already how much love could suffer; when He comes again He will show us how much love can do. The sufferings and the performances will be equally wonderful. It passes comprehension, the depth to which Divine love stooped for our salvation; equally inconceivable is the height to which the saved shall attain. Angels wondered when they saw Him enduring the curse, even “made a curse for us;” they shall wonder no less when they behold the resurrection of the dead and the Kingdom of God, when they shall see Him who bowed Himself down upon the cross, under God’s curse, coming forth from the right hand of the Majesty on High to dispense God’s blessing. What He endured for men is the measure of what He will bestow upon them. The sufferings of Christ are spoken of in Holy Scripture as the proof of God’s love. “God commenderth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” The sufferings have been, they are a fact which can be appealed to.

The reward of the sufferings is a promise yet to be fulfilled. The Spirit of Christ now given to us is the spirit of love, the seal of our forgiveness, the earnest of our inheritance, who makes the past and the future as present realities, enabling us to look upon the cross and to anticipate the glory which the cross hath purchased. God who has come to us manifesting love, demands of us that which we have seen in Himself. By His love He identified Himself with us first, then He went to the place which those with whom he was identified deserved to occupy ; and lastly, those made one with Him He raises to the glory into which He alone hath a right to enter. He took part in our misery, He gives us to share His blessedness. This is His love, and in order that such love should be wrought in us, we are united to Him and receive His Holy Spirit. Love which can identify itself with the wretched, which can suffer in their stead and raise them to the fellowship of its own happiness, this is the love which is the life of the Church of God. Love builds up, knowledge puffs up, gifts make a report concerning God, love knows Him. Love attracts, unites, and holds ; it never fails. Faith, hope, and love abide for ever, and the greatest of the three is love. When the Lord looked upon His Church in Corinth, where mightiest Heavenly powers were in exercise, where they came behind in no gift, He grieved because where gifts abounded love did not more abound. Although He commended in His Church in Ephesus zeal against evil-doers, and true spiritual discernment which rejected false apostles, yet, because the fire of love was decreasing, He warned them that the light of Christianity would soon be extinguished in the midst of them. The Angel of the Church in Ephesus was more zealous to keep out the false than to let in the true, to repress evil then to develop good, to bind Satan than to give liberty to Christ, therefore his works were not found perfect, and his candlestick would be removed. The Church is not merely a "society for discountenancing vice," it is "God's workmanship created in

Christ Jesus," for the doing of the works which are the expression and expansion of Divine love. Love may have no high office to administer, no great gifts to exercise, no alms to distribute, no martyrdom before the world to endure, yet is it accepted of God and accounted by Him the binding, and building, and perfecting power in His Holy Church. But the full and perfect witness for Christ is not to see love empty-handed, but love abounding in all the gifts and powers and distributions of God; love at the centre of authority, love in all the channels of administration, love God's almoner, dispensing His benefits. To the Church, beginning to fail in love, He said, Thy light is going out. To the Church seeking to recover the first love an "open door" is given, and the promise to it is "that the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and that the light of the sun shall be increased sevenfold." The recovery of the love to which God can entrust His gifts, and of the gifts which love needeth rightly to perform its works, is the triumph which the Holy Ghost, who is in the Church unto the end, waiteth to bestow upon those whose faith is able to lay hold of such a blessing. Blessed are they who desire intensely this double endowment, "who follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts," "who covet earnestly the best gifts," learning at the same time all that is taught unto them concerning "the more excellent way." The enemy divides, God unites. On this day may the Church throughout the world desire with all her heart to love God. May the members of the Church love one another, and all the creatures of God with God's pure love. Love will prompt to service, and God will bestow the means by which service can be performed. The spirit of prayer is awakened over all the earth. May it not be straitened within narrower limits than God's promises. Then shall the expected end soon come, and the fullest witness of the coming glory be borne before it appear. The Spirit present in the Church shall be manifested to the glory of God; and the Kingdom of God, which He announceth and

foresheweth, shall be soon given to all who are appointed for it, who live in the faith or have died in the hope of seeing and enjoying the blessed inheritance with Him "who loved us and gave Himself for us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, who hath redeemed us unto God, and made us unto our God kings and priests," who will also give us in due time "to reign with Him upon the earth," and to dwell with Him for ever.

Unto Him, our God and Saviour, with the Eternal Father, and the ever blessed Spirit, be all glory ascribed by the Church, and by all creatures, for ever and ever. Amen.

## XXVI.

### QUADRAGESIMA.

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*Ep.*—2 COR. vi.    *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. iv.

“HE that is begotten of God, keepeth himself; and that wicked one toucheth him not.” In the gospel for this day is recorded the victory over the tempter of Him who was “tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin;” and in the epistle one of His members is presented to us, as able to say of himself, “giving no offence in anything.”

These scriptures are placed by the Church at the commencement of the season of Lent, when in the most especial manner all who are called with the Christian name are reminded of the conflict they have to wage with all the enemies of God; that we might enter upon the struggle with confidence, beholding Him who prevailed, and His followers, who prevailed also by cleaving to Him, and by receiving from Him the power to overcome.

The first who followed the Lord with a perfect heart, and who conquered their enemies in His might, cried unto the Church to follow them, and manifest the same victory which they did, to the glory of Christ.

We give offence in nothing, and we call upon you to do the same. We are surrounded by those who are ready to blame us; let them not be able to blame us justly. Let it be true of the Church, as of the Head of the Church, “They hated me without a cause.” “Receive not the grace of God in vain.” Let the fruit of grace appear. Let it be seen what God can do in those who put their trust in Him. The grace of God was not given unto the Head of the Church “in vain.” The Spirit of God came down upon Him at His

baptism, and He used for God what God sent unto Him. Let it be with the body as it was with the Head. It may be so; "We testify unto you," said Paul, that it may be so; for we "can do all things through Christ" that strengtheneth us. We give "no offence in anything," but in everything approve ourselves as the ministers of God. We proclaim from Scripture, and from our own experience, that "now is the day of salvation;" the salvation which was promised before, and prefigured in other dispensations, is now come in its reality. That salvation is effected by the grace which ye have received. You can, if you will, serve God with body, soul, and spirit. Now is the time to obtain "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus." The "eternal glory," which the saved shall inherit, is soon to appear. Christ was saved! No power prevailed against Him, to make Him fail in the work which was "given Him to do." God was nigh unto Him; He heard Him and succoured Him; ran to His help when He heard His cry. He who heard Christ heareth those who are in Christ. Let Him hear your voice crying for help, and He will come to your help at the sound of it. And the grace which He has given you shall save you. It is equal to this effect. The Holy Spirit obtained for you by Jesus Christ, bestowed upon you by God your Father, shall save you, if you will give Him room to work. Let Him come to you in every way which God hath appointed for Him to come in. Let Him have access to you and free action upon you, and you shall be brought into the condition of giving offence in nothing, of deserving no blame. God will not blame you, and man cannot.

The Holy Ghost cannot save us if we will not know Him in all the modes of His operation, through all the channels of His manifestation which He is pleased to employ. We cannot accept Him when He works in one ministry, and undervalue or disregard Him when He approaches us through another. We must yield to Him the pipe which He has promised to fill with the breath of God. If He ask for one

thing we may not put Him off with another. If He demand a given number of vessels, to contain all the treasure from God which He wants to communicate, we must not limit Him. The Holy Spirit can bring us into "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." He can bring us to the condition of the "perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." He can make us to have the faith in God, and the knowledge of God, which the Son hath ; and which He giveth to the many sons, of whom He is the first-born. He can thereby make us the "perfect man ;" the full-grown and complete creature, for the Creator's use ; the help for His Son. This is the work assigned to Him, who was given unto us in the beginning. But this work He doth through divers ministries. If we will not have them, we must so far be without Him ; and being without Him, we are not free from blame ; but are open to censure, most just censure, on every hand.

Brethren, if up to this hour the Church has received the grace of God in vain (in vain as to some respects, not in all), if up to this hour the result which Christ prayed for is not seen, shall we therefore despair ? God forbid ! Though He have smitten us for our sins, we will trust in Him. Though He may have taken from us those to whom, according to our judgment, He could speak most, and by whom He could work most, still we will continue to hope in Him. While we live we will avow that we are straitened in ourselves and not in God ; we will wait for His salvation ; we will pray that we may behold the days of His right hand ; we will remember that we are called to give "no offence in anything ;" and we will not cease to make mention before God of His faithful promises, which Christ found to be true, and to the truth of which His body should witness also. Amen.



## XXVII.

### FIRST SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

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*Ep.*—I THESS. iv. 1. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xv. 21.

IMPURITY and diabolic possession are closely united. One is the highway to the other; one is the inevitable torment awaiting the other. In this penitential season of the ecclesiastical year, for two successive Lord's days, this connection is pressed upon us by the Communion portions of Holy Scripture which the Church puts into our hands, when the epistles treat of and inculcate purity, and the gospels present instances of possession and torment by evil spirits.

The gospel for this day brings before us a mother from one of the most impure nations of antiquity imploring deliverance from satanic possession for her daughter; and the epistle shows us the spiritual father's anxious care for his children, that they should be guarded against the unclean spirit by being delivered from all uncleanness. In the gospel we see the Lord driving out the sole occupant, in the epistle the Lord's servant purifying the vacated dwelling. St. Paul spoke more plainly to those Greeks than, in the present day of perhaps too morbid refinement, Christian teachers can address themselves to those whom they see in the churches. Yet it is necessary in a licentious and self-indulgent age to sound the warning which Holy Scripture supplies us with, especially when one of the names by which corrupted society, baptised Christian society, of the last days, is denominated is the name of Sodom. Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem are the three types of the Church, in its final condition antecedent to judgment: the chosen city where the Lord shall be crucified afresh, the oppressing nation which must be utterly destroyed before the worship of God

can be set up, and the city of impurity, which must be burned with fire. And there is a reference in the epistle for this day to the last catastrophe, in the words "because that the Lord is the avenger of all such." Here the Apostle warns that even in the Christian Church would be perpetrated the abominable wickedness for which the cities of the plain were consumed. Therefore he sets himself against all fleshly impurity, running along the line of it from its simplest and least loathsome form to its most odious and execrable and monstrous excesses. But it is not enough for the Christian Church merely to stop short at the brink of the precipice. Those who name the name of Christ should flee far from the boundary line which separates good and evil; they should discern the remote beginnings of sin, and fight the enemy on the distant borders of their territory, not in their central position, to which he has reached over ravaged plains and ruined cities. The most effectual defence against an enemy is often aggressive war. Therefore he said, "As ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more."

It is a base soul which is always striving merely to escape censure; the noble spirit labours to win praise. The child who says "I will not cause my parent's eye to weep when it looks upon me," says well; but when he says "I will cause it to gleam with joy when it beholds me," it is far better. To this excellence St. Paul could urge the Thessalonians, for they were earnest and loving persons. In this first Church there still glowed the first love, and love is always more ambitious of winning smiles than studious of escaping frowns. The slothful servant who hid his talent in the napkin was afraid of offending God if he should miscarry; the diligent servant who put out his lord's money to usury hoped to please his master by successful service. One would not move lest he should disturb the ear by an inharmonious sound, or pain the eye by an ungraceful motion; the other rejoiced in activity under the consciousness that the eye of love was observing it. In the presence of a harsh or suspected

parent sad immobility is the mark of the child ; in the presence of the loving and trusted one he is free and joyous and active. Therefore St. Paul did not say to them, " Be still, lest you offend God ;" but " Walk that you may please Him, and abound more and more in the work, that He may have more and more pleasure in you." The way to escape vice is to walk with virtue. The way to guard ourselves against the devil is to delight ourselves in the Lord continually.

If men would preserve themselves from evil concupiscence and its suffering, let them know how to possess their bodies " in sanctification and honour." The highest honour we can put upon our bodies is to sanctify them to God's service ; and consecration to God is the highway to honour, not only with God and His angels, but in the end even with men. The body which in youth is sanctified to God in chastity and purity, in matured life is honoured with strength and grace, in old age with health and vigour. The man whose sanctification begins earliest, and is carried out most perseveringly, shall reap the largest harvest of honour in this world and in the next. The family which is brought up in sanctity is generally most honoured on the earth ; the nation which as a vessel of large quantity is most faithfully consecrated to God by its rulers and by the spirit of its people, is the nation which becomes most laden with honour and wealth, and most resplendent with glory. The object which is placed in the sunshine is covered with light. We cannot be presented before God and kept before Him as clean vessels for His use without attaining to honour. Behold Him in whose name we are constituted, by whom we worship God. He kept Himself in sanctification, see how he has been exalted in honour. He offered the sacrifice which no foul bird of the air could touch. His vigilance and labour preserved the sacrifice from defilement. He can keep us awake in the service of God, and make us equal to it. Let us come to Him this day for strength and power unto this end. He will not disappoint us. To His holy name be glory for ever and ever.

## XXVIII.

### SECOND SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

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*Ep.*—2 PETER i. 16, 21. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xvii. 1, 9.

THE subject of the gospel for this day is the Transfiguration of the Lord; the epistle gives the interpretation of it. According to the three Evangelists, who record the fact, the Transfiguration took place soon after the notable confession of Christ made by St. Peter, in answer to the question addressed by the Lord unto His disciples. "Whom say ye that I am?" He heard by the mouth of one of His disciples the true confession concerning Himself, and then He granted to him, with two of his brethren, a vision of the change which His Lord should undergo, before the meaning of that confession should be fully understood.

No doubt, when the confession was made by the disciples and accepted by the Lord, and was declared by Him to be, not a discovery made by man, but a revelation given by God, they fully regarded Him as the perfected Christ, and recoiled with horror from the thought that He should ever die. In their hearts they said, "He is Christ, and Christ abideth ever." By His Transfiguration the Lord showed unto His disciples the glory to which His body should attain; by His word He instructed them that His death should precede that glory. He must die before He can attain to the glory, because the sin of the world is upon Him and must be expiated by Him; but He showed that the human body could be glorified without the suffering of death, prefiguring what His Apostles afterwards taught, that all should be changed, though all should not pass through the sleep of death.

The first great earnest of His Kingdom granted to the Lord was His baptism with the Holy Ghost; the second was His Transfiguration on the Mount. It is recorded that both came upon Him while in the act of prayer to God, giving to His faith its highest exercise. As He prayed the Holy Ghost descended upon Him from the opened heavens, "As He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered," "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light," "exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them," "white and glistening," whiter than the fuller's art could reach, white as the snow, God's brightest creature on the earth, white as the light of Heaven.

His prayer brought down upon Himself the Holy Ghost and the prefiguration of the glory of His Kingdom. He prayed for His Church, and in answer to His prayer we received, on the day of Pentecost, the Heavenly Comforter. Salvation "to the uttermost" shall be the second answer, because "He ever liveth to make intercession" for us. Jesus received the Holy Ghost and the glory of the transfiguration in the act of prayer. The Church, found waiting upon God in holy worship, is first filled with His Spirit, and afterward is "caught up" unto the Lord in clouds to meet Him in the air, to be ever with Him. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." On the day of His transfiguration Moses and Elias appeared in glory with the Lord; they talked with Him of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. The Lawgiver, the man zealous for the Law, the Law restorer, and the Law Fulfiller, met together; the subject of their discourse was the death which should magnify the Law and make it honourable. They spoke not of the Messiah's Kingdom, which the glory on the Mount foreshadowed; but of the cross, where that Kingdom should be won, where the love which prepared and bestowed that Kingdom should shine with its greatest brightness; they

touched the chord which awakens all the music of the thanksgiving in Heaven. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." They spake of the act next in sequence, the sufferings of Christ, the way to all "the glory that should follow." Moses and Elias knew what the people of God on earth at that time were ignorant of, what the disciples of Christ themselves were yet to learn, that Christ must first suffer, and afterwards "enter into His glory." Moses and Elias were in the light concerning Christ, and in the glory with Him, yet the disciples must not forget the difference between the Lord and His attendants. The Apostle of the Lord spake random words, but words, too, illustrative of the temptation which has, since the words were spoken, prevailed in the Church. The distinction between the Lord and His servants has not been sufficiently regarded. Honour due to Him alone has been shared with others. The tent of the servant has been pitched too close to the tent of his Master. He has been made, not the *one* Mediator, but one with many. While Peter was speaking, God's awful pavilion encompassed him and his brethren. They feared as they entered into that cloud. God's voice fell upon them. That voice takes no notice of Moses and Elias, but bespeaks all their attention, their undivided attention, to the well-beloved Son, in whom God was well pleased. The voice from the excellent glory said, "Hear ye Him." The glorified Son is the last Teacher sent from God. He is the Giver of the new Law, He is the Restorer of the breach, He is the Alpha and the Omega. "Ye are complete in Him." In Him dwelleth bodily the fulness of God. He who spake on the Mount as "not knowing what he said," speaks to the Church, in his epistle, the words of certainty and truth. "We made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Our foundation for that proclamation is not a mythology which human wisdom has constructed; we saw what we make known; what we heard was, if possible, more wonderful than what we saw. We saw the

Lord glorified, but we also saw Moses and Elias in glory with Him; but we heard the voice of God giving to Him "honour and glory" in which no other might share. "This voice which came *from Heaven* we heard when we were with Him in the Holy Mount;" what we saw was the fulfilment to us of the promise of the Lord, that we should not taste of death till we should see the Kingdom of God come with power. We saw the vision of that Kingdom, we know that that vision will come, though we be made to wait long for it. Peter saw the Lord on the Holy Mount, we see Him in the prophetic Scripture.

The several prophecies of Scripture are parts of one whole testimony of God concerning His Son. These prophecies are not insulated, standing by themselves, bounded by their local and private incidents; they are linked together; they sustain, they complete, they illustrate one another; they are converging rays meeting in a common focus, forming one light shining upon one object, the purpose of Almighty God, laid in His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Peter saw Him once on one Holy Mount; we see Him always in many high places of inspiration. Peter heard God testify of Him from the cloud of glory; we hear God's voice in all parts of His holy revelation. Everywhere He proclaims "Hear ye Him." Peter saw two of God's servants speaking with Jesus concerning His coming decease; we see, in the Scriptures of truth, all the witnesses, from righteous Abel to the last of the Prophets, testifying concerning Christ and His Kingdom, and His way unto it.

"We saw Christ in His glory, and we heard God's testimony concerning Him," is the language of the Apostle. You may see Him in the field of vision, which God has opened to you all. You may hear God speaking concerning Him. Prize and use what you have received, and you shall lay hold of and rejoice in your holy hope, as firmly and as fully as those who witnessed the transfigura-

tion and heard the voice of God. It will come and will not tarry.

The Apostle knew that the Kingdom of the Lord would appear in due time from what he saw and heard upon the Holy Mount. But all were not so highly favoured, all were not on the Mount. To them he speaks assuring words, most assuring.

I know, he said, that the day of the Lord is coming. You may all know it as certainly; yea, you have a surer word than even the voice which I heard upon the Mount. A man knows that day is approaching when the morning star has arisen before his eyes. He knows that it will soon be full day when he sees the dawn tinging the heavens with its earliest light. You may see the dawn of the day, the Star of Day may be lit up within your own hearts. The world we live in is a dark and noisome place, but the light which shows us our way of escape from it, and our entrance into the new world where righteousness dwelleth, is in our own hands.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of *this* prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.”

This commendation may be extended to those who take heed to the whole prophetic word, which has been given from the beginning of time. Indeed it is not clear that the rendering should be *this* prophecy; the whole book of God's Prophecy may be understood, and not one part of it only. The whole is one; the prophets from the beginning had one theme, “the testimony of Jesus.” “Blessed is he that readeth.” Blessed are “they that hear” is the language of the Beloved Disciple who survived his brethren. The blessing is defined by him to whom the foremost place was accorded; the day shall “dawn” upon them; the “Day-Star” shall arise in their hearts.” They shall sing, “God hath raised up a mighty salvation for us, as He spake by the mouth of



His holy prophets, which have been since the world began. That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear." He, remembering His mercy, hath holpen His servant Israel, as He promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever."

Unto Him, even the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be glory, &c., &c.

## XXIX.

### SECOND SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

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*Ep.*—EPH. v. 1. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xi. 14.

IN the epistle of the day we are called to love one another with the pure love of Christ. He did not love us because we deserved to be loved; He loved us when we were most hateful, and gave Himself as a sacrifice for us. He died for us, that by His death and its wonderful consequences He might make us worthy to be loved.

The love of worthy persons in whom no fault is found, at whose hands we receive nothing but that which is agreeable, is not the love here recommended. Such love we can never exercise, for want of suitable objects in this life; and unless men understand this matter aright they will find that the Church is the place for learning to hate in, because there, from the knowledge of duty being very accurate, omissions and transgressions can hardly escape detection; there is always strong ground upon which to fix accusations, and abundance of excuse for alienation and aversion. We are to love men, not primarily because they are worthy to be loved, but because God loves them, and Christ has undertaken to save them; and we in our place and measure are to co-operate with Him in the work of their salvation. "I suffer the loss of all things for the elect's sakes, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." The love of Christ for men was not shewn forth in gratifying their sinful flesh nor in making them comfortable and easy in the commission of sin, but in delivering them from sin, and making them such as a pure and holy God

could not only endure but take delight in. Our love must have the like aim—to help men to the Kingdom of Heaven, to prepare them for enjoying it when they shall have arrived there. It is not true love to feed and strengthen in one another that which God hates and must judge. He loves his brethren best who most promotes their sanctification. Oh! for the Spirit of Christ so to fill His Church that we might receive one another as He received us all, to the glory of God, that our meeting with one another might be an unceasing stimulus to holiness! See how we are warned against the counterfeits of love. Let no one say “There is no need.” It is a people enjoying the liberty and joy of heart which the Spirit of God gives that have the courage to commit sin, which mere law-keepers and self-justifiers are too much in bondage to think of. There is a danger of love in the spirit leading the incautious to familiarity in the flesh. There is a danger of the redundant buoyancy of the soul, which has attained to the liberty of Christ, expressing itself foolishly; “foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient,” may flow forth from the light and gay and fearless heart, whence “giving of thanks,” eucharistic offerings, ought to proceed. “Is any merry, let him sing psalms.” Would that be said to us unless there were great danger of our mirth finding other outlets for itself than such holy channels? When the overt acts of fleshly wickedness are here condemned, and the actors doomed to expulsion from the Kingdom of God, and exposure to the fire from heaven, which will consume the defiled world, all things which, however remotely, lead to them, are associated with them, or suggestive of them, are involved in the like condemnation. Indeed, we are in danger of being too bold. Abuse of Christian liberty brought in idolatry and excess upon the spiritual Christian Church in the beginning of the dispensation; the same will strive to defile first, and ultimately to destroy the revival of spiritual religion at the close of it.

The Church walking in love is God's light in the world. Things that exist are as if they were not until the light makes them visible. The Church is the great proof that God exists, that there is one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, and one Holy Ghost the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. A man is seen where he dwells and works; the Church is the dwelling place of God, where He creates all things new in Christ Jesus. The end of man's existence, the ultimate use of the creation, are seen by what the Church does, and understood by what she says. Nowhere but in the Church can the angels of heaven see what man was made for, what service God can get out of His intelligent creatures, what help man can give to one another. Alas! a correct theory about the light is not the light; records of revelation and standards of faith and voluminous service books are not the light. Christ coming in flesh is the light; the Church living as the body of Christ is the light. "The truth as it is in Jesus" is not mere statement of truth, whether simple or recondite. It is not propositional orthodoxy; it is the true relations between God and man finding expression and manifestation in human life, truth embodied, word made flesh, the poor wood of the tabernacle covered with gold, enclosed in gold. We have been taught to aim at this; we were gathered to attain to this. Are we tired and disappointed? Do we hope to symbolise by things outside of us what we do not express by that which comes forth from us?

Religion is not a creed recited, a ceremonial performed, a ritual gone through. It includes all these; but over and above all these it is a walk of many steps, beginning at the font of baptism, or the pulpit of effectual calling, and extending to the resurrection and the Kingdom of Christ. How shall we make all these steps and evade none of them? The Lord can "keep us from falling." If God accept at our hands the memorial of His sacrifice, and vouchsafe to feed us Himself with that which we have offered to Him, then there

is hope; but this He hath promised to do, the more we expect from Him in Jesus Christ the better is He pleased with us. We present unto Him His Son, slain for us; the light before the memorial testifies for us that He is our light and our salvation. We will not fear; we will trust in the Lord our God, and wait for His blessing. Amen.

### XXX.

#### SECOND SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

---

*Ep.*—2 PET. i. 16, 21. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xvii. 1, 9.

IN the commemorations of the Church, the transfiguration of the Lord follows immediately His temptation. God put honour upon Him whom temptation could not overcome. The transfiguration of the Lord was the brightest foreshewing and the highest earnest of His glorified condition. When temptation could not turn Him aside from His work, He received the glorious earnest of His reward. When the work itself, from which He could not be turned aside, was accomplished, He received in its fulness the foreshadowed glory. When the Lord overcame the temptation of the evil angel, all the good angels of God gathered unto Him to do Him homage; to acknowledge themselves His servants, to be obedient to Him who was obedient to God. They joyfully accepted the God-man as their Lord and King; they “ministered unto Him.” The angels of God waited upon Him who came victorious out of the fiery temptation. All the angels of God shall worship Him, when God bringeth Him a second time into the world, to receive His Kingdom; the power and glory of which were shewn forth on the day of the transfiguration, when apostles and prophets were gathered unto Him on the Holy Mount. God and the Heavenly hosts glorified Him who overcame the tempter. Honour and glory from God and His angels shall be, yea, even now are, the portion of those who, baptised into the name of Him who overcame, do overcome by Him. Blessed are they for whom victory can be recorded, whose faith hath triumphed in the highest place; but blessed also are they who have ac-

knowledge their defeat with sorrow and shame. The Church ought never to have known defeat, being the body of Him who was "tempted in all points," but sinned not. The Head of the Church preserved for God the sacred deposit with which He was entrusted. He would not use the power of His anointing for selfish purposes, and under evil dictation. He would not deal deceitfully with the Word of God; garbling the Holy Scripture, making it minister to fanaticism and not to faith. He would not compass the best ends by bad means; gaining dominion over the Creation, by evil compromises with the ungodly, who held it in possession; but qualifying Himself for the rule of it, by worshipping God, and serving Him alone.

The Head of the Church was tempted to misuse the gift of the Spirit of God; to use partially the promises of Holy Scripture; to get possession unlawfully of God's Creation. The course of temptation in the Church has followed the like order; to abuse first, and then to lose the powers of the world to come; to wrest and pervert the Word of God; to take the Kingdom before the time, and by unlawful means. The Head of the Church overcame in the trial, but the people named by His name have not overcome; they have not witnessed to the power of the grace of God to obtain the victory; but rather to the power of the flesh to frustrate the grace of God, and cause it to be received in vain. The victory, by abstaining from sin, has not been ours; but the victory by repenting of it is within our reach. He who overcame when tempted received a glorious earnest of the reward prepared for Him; they who have been overcome, but repent, are accepted of God, and receive many earnestings from Him of the salvation about to be revealed in the day when God's mercy shall finally triumph; even the day of the appearing and glory of Jesus Christ our Lord. In the first temptation the woman was tempted first, and drew her head into ruin; in the second temptation the Head was tried first, and was found perfect; and by His sinlessness a door of

deliverance was opened to all who should follow Him in temptation, though not in victory. To those who neither conquer in the trial, nor repent when conquered, nothing remains but the darkness of despair. To those who can say "We have sinned," there is "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous."

God, who gave to His obedient Son the foretaste of the glory prepared for Him, rewards also the faithful who overcome by Him, with many foreshewings of the day when they shall be manifested in His Kingdom. He has set for them "a light in a dark place." While they behold that light, and give good heed unto it, the day that is coming dawns upon them, its Day-Star arises in their hearts. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy."

If this be true with respect to those who read and hear the last book of prophecy, it is also, and more abundantly, true of those who give heed to the whole prophecy of Scripture, and to the interpretation of it, which the Holy Spirit vouchsafeth unto them. This is the blessing which God bestows upon them, that, while they honour the "light which shineth in the dark place," they are lifted by Him into the light of that day whose sun shall never set.

They who honour God's word of hope are enabled by Him to touch, as it were, the thing hoped for. He works in them the faith which "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

But God will not suffer His children to dwell long in the brightest earnestness of their coming happiness. Peter and his brethren would build tabernacles upon the Mount of Transfiguration; but it could not be. The Lord resteth not till the regeneration be effected. Until then, He saith to His disciples, "Arise, let us go hence." "This is not your rest." The Lord passed from the Mount of Transfiguration to the garden of Gethsemane, to the cross, and to the sepulchre. He was perfected by resurrection from the dead. After His



resurrection He dieth no more, but liveth for ever unto God. We count not ourselves to have apprehended that for which we have been apprehended by Christ, until we shall have attained unto the resurrection of the dead. We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, that He may change our vile bodies, and make them like unto His own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

We rejoice in the light which shineth in the dark place, but we long for the day when the place shall be no longer dark; when the prince of darkness himself shall be chained in his appointed place; when the children of light shall be gathered into one, and shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father; when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of His glory. Amen.

Unto God Almighty, who will do all things exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think; to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and praise and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

## XXXI.

### THIRD SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

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*Ep.*—EPH. v. 1, 14. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xi. 14, 28.

THE gospel for the day presents to us four classes:—

1st. Those who, seeing Christ's miracle in behalf of the man possessed by a dumb spirit, ascribed the dispossession to satanic collusion.

2nd. Those who did not go so far, but who, notwithstanding this miracle, still withheld their adhesion, on what they would call, no doubt, a fair Scriptural ground, viz., that they should not accept any one as Messiah who did not give the sign from Heaven; who did not come as the Son of Man should come, according to the prophecy of Daniel. These people who asked the sign from Heaven, to satisfy their minds, are said to have *tempted the Lord*. They solicited Him to shew, at a wrong time, a true sign of Messiah. As Satan tempted Him to shew His power and His confidence in God in wrong ways, and to snatch at His Kingdom by unlawful means, so these men tempted Him to shew the sign of His second advent before He had wrought the works which belonged to His first.

A 3rd class, represented by a woman of the company, went farther than the latter in the recognition of Christ, but went not far enough to satisfy Him. They acknowledged Him to be a Son, who made His mother blessed. They commended her happy lot.

The 4th class is called up before our thoughts by Christ Himself, as the truly blessed. In answer to the cry, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked," He said, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it."

These four classes are in the world now. There are those who can see no evidence of the supernatural and of the Divine in Christ's works. There are those who, acknowledging both, still contrive to evade His claims upon them, by irrelevant and perverse quotation of Scripture, by misapplication of the very truth itself. There are those who recite litanies to the virgin mother of the Saviour, and exhaust their piety in pronouncing her blessed. And lastly, there are those "who hear the Word of God and keep it."

To this class let us belong, that we may inherit Christ's blessing.

Not those who bless His mother, and even heap laudation and panegyrics upon Himself, is the Lord pleased with; but He rejoices in those who receive from Him what He came down from Heaven to give; of whom He is able to say unto Him who sent Him, "What Thou gavest unto me I have given unto them, and they have received the gift, and know thereby, certainly, that Thou hast sent me." The woman who entertained Christ did not please Him as well as she did who sat at His feet, that she might hear His words. They who hear Christ's words, and give good heed to them, in due time receive His Spirit also; they become the dwelling place of God. A man cares for his house; God cares for His house. He guards it. He keeps it for His holy uses. The house which the evil spirits enter is an empty house; rather, a house unoccupied, untenanted, waiting for a tenant; not empty, but furnished; not neglected, but swept and adorned. A house kept vacant for a favoured occupant, cleared of everything offensive to his taste, furnished according to the fashion which pleases him and answers the end which he proposes; into which he may bring with him a company of revellers, where there is room and accommodation for himself and his guests: this is the picture which Christ gives of society in His day of sojourn amongst men.

The house that would not be yielded up to God, but was

reserved for another ; that would not be cleansed after the manner which God accounts cleansing, nor furnished and adorned according to His mind ; but which would have everything taken out of it, and everything put into it, according to the dictation of God's enemy ; that house was the Jewish Church in the last stage of its history. It would not "hear the word of God, and keep it." It would not be washed from its sins, and be filled with the fruits of righteousness by Jesus Christ. It refused to be made the dwelling place of God, and became "the habitation of devils."

Such will be the end of the Christian Church also, which refuses to hear what Christ has to speak unto her ; to receive what Christ has to give unto her. In the language inspired by God Himself, she is become the "habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This is the condition of those who, being in covenant with God, disregarded the terms of the covenant under which they were placed ; and who, naming the name of Christ, did not depart from all iniquity.

Let us take heed, lest any of us should be overtaken by this judgment. Let there be none amongst us who refuses to surrender himself unto God. Have confidence in Him ; let Him take possession of you ; let Him dwell in you. He has taken possession of you in your baptism, but you have to yield unto Him the possession. God has given Himself in vain if man refuses to receive. God gave His Son unto the world, but did the world receive the gift ? When God took His Son out of the world, He made Him Lord and Christ, and as Lord and Christ, set over all things, He gave Him unto His Church ; has the Church received Him ? Especially I say to those in the beginning of life, surrender yourselves unto God ; be not the unoccupied house reserved for the unclean spirit ; but be yielded up unto God, to be occupied by Him. Do not cast out of you the things which are an offence to Satan, modesty, reverence, truth, docility, obedience ; but be cleansed of the evil things which grieve

the Spirit of your Heavenly Father. Let God adorn you. Be not trained by the spirit of pride and wickedness for his service. We shall all be used in that for which we have been prepared. We cannot be trained for earth and hell, and after our training be occupied in heaven. The house, its cleansing, its furnishing, and its occupation are all in keeping. Shew me the house and its furniture, I cannot mistake for whom it is prepared. The things which minister to self-conceit, vain glory, and self-indulgence, cannot please the eye of Him who comes down from heaven to dwell with the humble and with the contrite, with those who tremble at His Word.

The gospel points out a terrible end, the epistle presents to us the Apostle labouring to prevent it. He urges upon the Church the life of true and holy love. He warns against all wicked counterfeits of it. With prophetic instinct he addresses to the Church a word, which would find its application to the fallen, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Even though the Church should have ceased from her watching, let her not sleep on unto death, but let her awake unto righteousness.

Sleep is the figure which describes those who had forgotten their hope and ceased their preparation. Yet let not even them despair. Let them awake, let them separate themselves from the dead, and Christ shall give them light. Those who awake in the time of the end shall be clothed with the armour of light. They shall fight against darkness, and overcome it. They shall shed light upon all things which ought to be known, upon the purpose of God, upon the constitution of His Church, upon the hope of His creation, upon the whole circle of knowledge embraced by the Word of God. They shall receive the reward and blessing of those who heard the Word of God and kept it. May our portion be with them. Amen.

## XXXII.

### THIRD SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

---

*Ep.*—EPH. v. 1. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xi. 14.

THE epistle and gospel show unto us what the Lord desires to see upon the earth. He desires to see the fruit of the Spirit. He desires to see the people who hear the Word of God and keep it. He longs to behold the fruit of God's Spirit, to see the result which the Holy Spirit can accomplish. Ripened fruit seems to ask the hand of the husbandman to gather it. The Church, which hath made herself ready, cries with resistless importunity of love, "Come, Lord Jesus." We must not long for the future as those who are weary of the present; but as those whom the full fruition of present grace ripens for and urges into the coming glory. Enoch, before he was translated, "had this testimony, that he pleased God." The Church, the portion of the Church which, in the counsels of God, is reserved for the honour of translation without seeing death, will be that portion which shall have yielded to the full unto the Spirit of Life, and called Jesus Christ Lord with truest and most unreserved faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." By trusting in Him whom God has sent, we do please God. The more perfect and full is our trust, the more entirely do we please God. "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." The only work which God demands of us is that we should commit ourselves unto Him whom God has sent unto us. The result of this, the fruit of this being seen first, then the Kingdom can be manifested. Believing in Him whom God

has sent, is the preparation for Him whom God will send. To those who welcomed Him, and rejoiced in Him, as He came first, as He came in the flesh to die, as He came by the Spirit giving eternal life, and the foretaste and earnest of that which the new life shall inherit, to those He will come a second time, to snatch them from the wrath to come, to give them an abundant entrance into God's Kingdom, to fill them with joy unspeakable, to give them the full measure of the eternal weight of glory. Blessed are they who are shewing the Lord's death till He come, who are not quenching the Spirit, but giving God thanks continually for that glorious firstfruits of Christ's Passion and Death, that full earnest of the inheritance which He will account His exceeding great reward. They shall indeed exult in the end of God, who have not despised, but estimated aright, and set at their true value, all the means of its accomplishment.

We hope for the resurrection of the just. In proportion as we yield to the agency which makes us just, and attain to the condition which is called *just*, the reward awaiting the just will be made to shine before the eye of our innermost being, by Him who hath decreed both the end and the preparation for it. To those who shall attain to the resurrection of the just, there is a resurrection appointed even in this life, according to the language in the epistle, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and *arise* from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." If you hope to start forth from the dead, at the coming of the Lord, and to leave them behind in their graves, silent and dishonoured, *arise* from the dead *now*, for He who cometh has even now come to you by His Spirit to awake you unto righteousness, to give you light, to awake you out of sleep; and when you are awakened to give you all the light that a man awake desires and needs, for all the work which he has been raised from sleep to be occupied with and to finish. A living man asleep is, as far as the performance of his duties in life, like the man who is dead. "Hidden virtue differs little from buried sloth." The Church is asleep when she has forgotten the purpose of God con-

cerning her, and the high calling wherewith He has called her. The Spirit of Christ cometh to awake us out of that sleep, and to separate us entirely from that which is dead, and to fill us with the light, which belongs to those who are in the land of the living. This spiritual resurrection is the sign and the earnest of the literal resurrection. To those who awake to the first, God gives light concerning the second. The present resurrection is the fruit of the Spirit; the ripeness of which will draw forth Christ Jesus the Lord from the throne of the Father unto the earth once more. "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." God and Christ sent the Holy Ghost into the Church to make men good, righteous, and true. "There is none good but God." If goodness appear in fallen man, God's Spirit must have wrought it. He makes us good. He makes us to propose to ourselves a good end; He gives us a good heart, a disposition to do good; good motives, good desires, good feelings, a good will, and good works. He makes us to abhor to do evil and to work mischief. He disposes us to do that which is good in the sight of God, that which shall work good, and good only, to our fellow-men, and to all God's redeemed creation. He is also the Spirit of righteousness. He will do good, and will not violate righteousness in the way of doing it. The goodness of God is not simple benevolence, gratifying itself at the expense of propriety, and fitness, and right, and justice.

When God would pour out of His goodness upon us, He first vindicated His justice, and magnified His law and made it honourable. He did not justify the creature whom He purposed to bless, and to make happy, until He could be just whilst justifying. The righteous sentence was executed first upon the fallen creature which merited it (upon the Innocent and Spotless One, who made Himself one with it), before God abounded unto us in His gifts of goodness. Because of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," God has been able, from the beginning of the world, to give us "rain," and "sunshine," and "fruitful seasons," and to fill



“our hearts with food and gladness.” If God has been good to us in the way of righteousness, honouring righteousness, so are we taught by God’s Spirit to exercise our goodness, within the limitations of the righteous appointments of God, which He has set for its regulation. God’s Spirit gives us the disposition to do good, and shows us all the right ways of doing it; that the good done may be effectual and may bring forth fruit to God’s glory. Simple beneficence is often merely mischievous. It may easily be converted into the lawless love which is forbidden in the epistle before us. The fruit of the Spirit, then, is not only in all goodness, but in all righteousness; and being in all goodness and in all righteousness, it shows forth the truth; it makes the Church in which the fruit is borne the pillar and ground of the truth. The truth concerning God is that Jesus Christ has come in flesh; and the evidence, the proof, the manifestation of that truth, is the holiness of the Church, the fruit of the Spirit appearing in the Church. In the gospel of the day the Lord, as it were, calls for His Church when He says, “Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.” In the epistle He gives us its three marks—Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth—the fruit which ripens only in those who are united to Christ and filled with the Holy Ghost. In the gospel there are four classes; two of them vex the Spirit of the Holy One; the first by blaspheming His Spirit, the second by perverting His Word; the third gives Him no joy by its passionate carnal commendation. He turns from those who malignantly and unjustly condemn Him, and from those who praise Him and her who bare Him, out of the excitement of mere natural admiration and affection. From those who judge Him, favourably or unfavourably, He turns away, to find comfort and rest in those who should hear His words and keep them, who should be drawn by hearing His Word to union with Himself, to participation of His Spirit, to the joint inheritance of His Kingdom. May His eyes soon behold them made ready for His appearing and Kingdom. Amen.

### XXXIII.

#### FOURTH SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

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*Ep.*—GAL. iv. 21. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN vi. 1.

IN Jesus Christ human nature is seen made free from all the evils under which it came by its fall from its original righteousness.

He attained to freedom first, then to power and dominion. He destroyed the works of the devil, and then sat down at the right hand of God. The works of the devil are sin and death, the two terrible oppressors of the human race. Christ condemned sin in the flesh of man, and fulfilled all righteousness. He abolished death, and brought into manifestation eternal life. Having destroyed the works of the devil, He proceeded to work, or rather to finish, the works of God. The devil was the destroyer, God is the Builder again of that which was destroyed. The Son of God presented in Heaven, in His own person, the model of the firstfruits of the new creation, and then began to create anew according to that model which He had presented unto God, which God had accepted and set in the highest place, above all the works of His hands—God manifest in flesh, over all, blessed for ever.

The Man whom God hath exalted, He is free. Sin could not prevail against Him; death hath no more dominion over Him. We shall be free when we shall be made like unto Him. This likeness, for which we were apprehended of Christ Jesus, we long to apprehend. This is the righteousness for which the Apostle of old counted all things but dross and dung—counting all things else but loss that he might win Christ, and through Him attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

The Jerusalem which is above is free; when the freedom of all the citizens of that heavenly city is completed, then shall it be seen coming down from heaven, to be the seat and centre of universal dominion; "and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." Jerusalem, the free city, is already above, because the Builder of the city and the First Stone of the building, the Foundation and the Corner-stone are one; and He is in the highest place of all, at His Father's right hand. All the city shall in God's good time be seen compactly built together on the Foundation, under the Top-stone, and shall come down from God out of Heaven, the dwelling-place of Him who createth all things new, the joy and glory and light of His whole new creation. We attain not to this perfect freedom, until our bodies as well as our souls are built up in the image of Christ; but we have the beginning and the earnest of it now, for it is written, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." And we have received of His Spirit that we might know and attain unto "the things which are freely given unto us of God."

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; such liberty as the Lord Himself enjoyeth. The Spirit of the Lord has been given to us that we might be enabled to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man who is our Lord, and exchange thereby the slavery and misery which are in our flesh as *we* have it, for the liberty and blessedness of humanity as it is found in *Jesus Christ*. There is no way of attaining to the liberty of Christ but by partaking of Christ Himself. In the Sacrament which He hath instituted we have the memorial of His death for us, the assurance of His life in us, and the sign of His continual presence with us. When we celebrate this holy ordinance we behold our first condition of existence into which sin entered, and death by sin, taken out of the way by His cross; we behold how we become new creatures by eating His flesh and drinking His

blood ; and we behold the end of all, that He will come again to those who have kept the memorial of His death, and who have lived by His life, to dwell with them in the Kingdom of God for ever. The memorial of His death, the participation of His life, the hope of entering into and possessing His Kingdom, are the things with which God would comfort the hearts of His faithful worshippers. He would cause us to remember that Christ died to take away our sins ; to know that He lives in us to build us up in righteousness and true holiness ; to rejoice in hope of His glory soon to be revealed. In the holy service in which we are engaged we behold the Atonement, the Regeneration, the Kingdom, the Curse taken away, the Blessing bestowed, the Birthright made sure for ever.

Blessed are they out of whose hearts, by whose tongues, God can draw forth and express a full Eucharist, a song of thanksgiving, into which the wonders of the past, the present, and the future are gathered. The Cross, the Spirit, and the Kingdom ; the triumph of God's mercy and grace and faithfulness. May we be counted worthy to bring such an Eucharist. Amen.

## XXXIV.

### FOURTH SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

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*Ep.*—GAL. iv. 21. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN vi. 1

THREE times in the year the miraculous feeding of the multitude furnishes the gospel for the Communion Service; before Easter, after Pentecost, and on the Lord's-day immediately preceding Advent.

1st, it is connected with an epistle which warns against legal bondage.

2ndly, with one which sets forth in the strongest manner the demand for holiness.

3rdly, with the prophecy from Jeremiah concerning the King who should "reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the earth."

Liberty, holiness, fitness, and readiness for the Kingdom are the subjects which the Church binds up with the wondrous narrative. How shall we be liberated from the spirit of bondage? How shall we be made "holiness unto the Lord"? How shall we be filled with the hope and earnest of the Kingdom of God?

To the three questions the answer is one. The one gospel thrice repeated furnishes the answer, Jesus fed the multitude which followed Him, as the children of Israel were fed with manna in the desert, when they journeyed from the house of bondage to the Land of Promise. His feeding set forth three things.

1st, the providential supply granted to those who have learned from Christ to utter the two petitions, "Thy kingdom come," "give us this day our daily bread."

2ndly, the Perpetual Feast, the perfect satisfaction of

every desire of our being in the Kingdom of God; when those words shall be fulfilled, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

3rdly, the Eucharistic Feast in the Church, by which we are made partakers of Christ's Body and Blood; and of all the blessings which His precious blood-shedding hath obtained for us.

The Lord connects the participation of Himself with this miracle, saying, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man *shall* give unto you." "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me even he shall live by Me." We become free by that which we eat and drink; by a holy feast we are made free from sin, and are fitted for the Kingdom of God.

Christ took that with which He meant to feed the multitude into His own holy hands, "and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down," and so the multitude were filled.

"I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," is the confession of him who said also, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

We cannot by any law-keeping work ourselves into liberty of spirit, into holiness of life, into the foretaste of and earnest longing for the future glory. We attain unto these things by eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Him that is free, of Him that is holy, of Him that is ready for the Kingdom of God, and only waits for His Church to be prepared to inherit

with Him. The Church very soon began to weary God with what the natural powers could accomplish, instead of allowing Him to behold what His grace could work in the body of Christ. Hagar became a mother before Sarah. The beauty and strength and fruitfulness of the flesh have abounded. In the fullest sense in which it might be manifested, the free-woman and her son are yet to be looked for. "We brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Who said this? He who could also say, "I am crucified and yet I am living. I have the sentence of death in myself, yet do I beget sons unto God." Of whom said he this? Of those who "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free," "who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Dealing with God as a Law-giver feeds pride in the ignorant, and fills the conscientious with terror. God does not take pleasure in our pride, nor in our fear. Therefore He does not say to us, "Obey My commandments, that so you may merit My favour;" but He says, "First be filled with My grace, and then learn and do My will."

The Pelagian and semi-Pelagian doctrines were amongst the first evil principles that troubled and weakened the Church. They brought the Church into the condition typified by the bond-woman, the young bond-woman strong in nature's strength, able to abound in works and fruits; but not in such works and fruits as God demanded.

The Galatians were making the Church the antitype of Hagar, the perfection of confidence in the flesh. The offspring of that mother would be the sons with fear in their spirit and cruelty in their heart, antitypes of Ishmael, the tameless inhabitant of the desert. Paul laboured that the Christian Church might be seen as the true Sarah, dead in herself, conceiving and bringing forth by the mighty power of God. Sarah is the Church honouring the Spirit, giving liberty to the Spirit; the Church affording full proof of Christ's words, "The Spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak."

The Church knowing how to yield to the Spirit of her Head, the Spirit of God and of Christ, shall be able to bring forth the Son of promise, the man child, the heir, whose name is "Laughter;" the free, joyous, and loving one, filled with the Spirit of adoption. The first children born in the Christian Church were such; the last who shall be honoured to see the Lord coming in His glory shall be such; those who shall be snatched up to meet Him shall be such. Those who are not glorying in any Jerusalem that is now, but are beholding in faith the city which *He* builds *who* is the First Stone and the Builder also of the city which is in Heaven; which He will bring down from Heaven, when He hath builded it; they shall attain to the excellent glory of which we speak.

Jerusalem on the earth has been taken away from those who would not abide in the blessedness which belonged to them, as the children of the Jerusalem which is above. Jerusalem was given to the stranger and false prophet, and men have builded Babylon the great. The cry has arisen for the Jerusalem which is above to come down in its perfectness. The glory of the free-woman and her Son is soon to be revealed. Soon shall the sentence, already recorded, be finally pronounced, "Cast out the bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman." Amen.



## XXXV.

### FIFTH SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

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*Ep.*—HEB. ix. 11. *Gosp.*—LUKE iv., &c.

THE children of Israel were not at liberty to serve God until they were first sprinkled with the blood of animals slain in sacrifice. And if, in the course of their daily life, any of them came in contact with a dead man, however he came by his death, whether he died in his tent or was slain in the field, if they came in contact with a dead man, or any part of a dead man, or anything touched by the dead, their liberty of serving God was taken away by the fact, and not restored to them until they were sprinkled with the water of separation; that is, water prepared for those separated, water with which were mingled the ashes of an heifer offered in sacrifice and consumed by fire. The epistle for this day assures us that these things, this blood of slain oxen and goats, and this water of separation, composed of pure water mingled with ashes, were typical of the blood of Christ, which must be sprinkled upon all men before they can serve the living God; and if their service of God be interrupted by sin, must be sprinkled upon them again to remove the sin which has caused the interruption. The blood of Christ "purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Men know this by experiencing the sprinkling. They who seek to know how according to laws of philosophy such an effect can be produced before they submit themselves to the operation of the cause which produces it are of that class who "seek after wisdom," to whom the preaching of the cross is foolishness. Such persons do not believe God,

but sit in judgment upon Him. They are wiser than He, and lightly regard, and therefore lose His great salvation.

“The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness,” but to those who “are saved it is the power of God” and the wisdom of God. After his first disobedience man was not free to serve God; he could not presume to do it until the penalty annexed to disobedience was endured. The penalty annexed to disobedience was death; the sinner shall die. Disobedience is not followed by a second offer, as obedience, but by death, which makes all second offers impossible. Therefore Christ died, “the just for the unjust.” He took the sinner’s place, albeit He was without sin. By His own blood He obtained freedom to enter into the holy places where God should be served. He lived long enough to prove Himself the Sinless One, to fulfil all righteousness, to labour for God as the faithful servant; and having lived and served without sin, He died as if He had committed all sin. “He was made sin.” “He was made a curse.” “He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” The created nature which He bore did thus obtain liberty to serve God. In no other way has it obtained liberty. For any man to attempt to serve God who is not doing so because Christ died, and because the blood of Him who died is sprinkled upon his conscience, is to take a liberty with God, which He will punish by death, even death eternal. “How shall we escape if we neglect” the “great salvation?” “There is no more sacrifice for sin.” A sacrifice for sin *must be* according to the will of God. That sacrifice *has been* in the death of Christ. Whosoever will not come to God through the door which that sacrifice has opened can never come to God at all, except as to a consuming fire. Christ died not merely to change on our behalf a condition of guilt and punishment into freedom from condemnation and security from penal suffering, but also to bring us into that position in which we should be at liberty to serve the living God. We are made free, not that we may live in idle selfishness, but that we may

serve God, and through serving Him increase the amount of good and happiness in the universe. Service is not performed to "purge the conscience," but begins when the conscience is purged. The perfect service commences when all consciousness of death and contact with it has ceased. Christ entered into the holy places by death and resurrection from the dead. We shall obtain liberation from the things which oppress and obstruct us in the same way.

The people to whom this epistle was primarily addressed were glorying in services which had been rendered by men in the natural condition, and were wistfully looking back upon the temporal inheritance which was the reward of their services. To them it was announced that Christ was "a High Priest of good things to come." He would enter into a freedom for the service of God Himself first, and then would lead into the same freedom all who should put their trust in Him. All attaining to that freedom should render the true service. Living in their whole being with a life incapable of death, they should serve the living God, and in their service enjoy not the land of Canaan for a season, but an eternal inheritance. Some of the servants have passed through the first stage of liberation, their spirits are escaped from the body of humiliation; soon shall they take possession of the body of glory, and those who remain shall be changed, the greater and more perfect tabernacle shall be set up, and the worship shall be offered, in which man shall find his full satisfaction, and from which God shall receive the perfect measure of honour, praise, and glory. Amen.

## XXXVI.

### SUNDAY BEFORE EASTER.

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*Ep.*—PHIL. ii. 5. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xxi. 17.

THE Church must be one, in order that God may be served, that man may be saved, and the creation blessed. Therefore St. Paul entreats those to whom he writes, by every consideration powerful to affect them, to be of one mind. "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." As you value the treasures of Christ and of God, keep the vessel unbroken which is to hold them all, and by which they can be communicated to all the generations of mankind. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory." "Look not every man on his own things." Contention, vain-glory, strife, and selfishness, will break the Church to pieces; therefore, instead of them, let the mind which was in Christ be in you—the mind to serve God and to suffer for man. Christ Jesus is made Lord over all, because He loved all and cared for all. Those who love most shall rank highest with Him in His Kingdom. Those who will contend for themselves God will leave to themselves; and they shall lose all, through their lusting to have all. Those who will contend for the Body, the Head of the Body will contend for them. Forgetting themselves, they shall not be forgotten of Him. Those who remember themselves shall perish from His remembrance.

The exhortation to the Church, therefore, is, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Consider His amazing humiliation, His most wonderful self-sacrifice.

He who was equal with God humbled Himself to become man; and more deeply still, for, "being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." His descent from Godhead to the creature seemed not so great a humiliation as His descent from fellowship with the creature to His death upon the cross. The sinner is below the man. He identified Himself with the sinner, being "made sin for us." The Lord did not touch the lowest point by incarnation. He reached the lowest point by death. When the lowest point was reached, then He began to rise, then God began to exalt Him highly, by resurrection, by ascension into Heaven, by session at the right hand of God, by fullest endowment with the Holy Ghost, by assurance that all His enemies should be made His footstool.

The epistle records the height of His exaltation after His sufferings; in the gospel we see what an earnest of His exaltation God gave to Him on His way to them. He entered the royal city as a King, making His approach according to Divine prescription, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. He was conducted by His chosen servants; He was surrounded by a willing multitude, acclaiming in Divine enthusiasm; "Hosanna to the Son of David!" was shouted; and out of the mouths of babes and sucklings praise was perfected.

He wept as He approached the city. When He entered it He went first to the Temple, where was found chiefly the cause of His weeping. He vindicated the honour of the House of God, rebuking in it the spirit of covetousness; magnifying the spirit of prayer; healing in the midst of it the lame and the blind. It was the Judge of Israel who rode into the city, that He might be first recognised as the Judge, and then be smitten upon the cheek. It was Israel's Shepherd, and King, and Saviour, who was present, and the signs of His authority and power and mission from Almighty God were not wanting. On His way to death the hope was set

before Him by which He endured the cross and despised the shame. When the bitterness of death was passed, then did God highly exalt Him, and gave unto Him "a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

If the mind which was in Christ Jesus be in us now, a participation in His glory shall be ours at His coming again. How shall His mind be in us but by Himself abiding in us? He Himself in person is in Heaven at the right hand of God, but His Spirit is on the earth, gathering together the election of God from all the nations of mankind, building up the body of Christ. As Christ Jesus was the gift of God unto the world, so the Holy Ghost is the gift of Christ unto the Church. By Him we know that God is, and that Jesus Christ is come from God. By Him Christ dwells in us, and we in Him. The real presence of Christ, of which we have the mystical symbols, the sacramental signs, in the holy Eucharist, that real presence we experience by the Holy Spirit, which we have received, even the Spirit of Christ and of God. By Him we do indeed eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood. God establisheth us in Christ, and anointeth us; He also sealeth us, and giveth unto us the earnest of our inheritance in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

To the Church which had received the Holy Ghost, the Apostle could say, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." To all those who magnify the gift which they have received, the same words are still confidently addressed. Expect those words to be fulfilled in you, and they shall be fulfilled. You shall in your measure be made to follow your Lord in His humility and self-sacrifice. You shall be partakers of the glory which, in the day of His exaltation, He will bestow on those who, in the day of their probation, allowed His Spirit to prepare them for it. Unto God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever. Amen.

## XXXVII.

### SUNDAY BEFORE EASTER.

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THE epistle and gospel set before us the humility and patience of Christ. The first expression of His humility was subordination to His equal; the last manifestation of it was suffering for those infinitely inferior to Him, and in their character utterly unworthy. "Being in the form of God," counting it "not robbery to be equal with God," He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." His patience appears, not only in the endurance of the sufferings which were inflicted upon Him, but also in His waiting for God's time for exalting Him. His equality with God did not hinder His subordination to God; although that subordination involved the abandonment for a season of the glory which He had with God; and the suffering of the whole bitterness of the curse which the fallen creation merited. Neither did His knowledge that every knee should bow to Him, and every tongue confess Him Lord, cause Him to seize His Kingdom before the time. He obeyed, and counted the cost of obedience. He hoped, and patiently waited for His hope. The collect for the week presses upon the Church the example of His humility, and prays that the Church may follow His patience. We do not follow His humility and patience by endeavouring to create for ourselves circumstances as similar as possible to those in which He was placed, and by sternly submitting to all the sufferings which such circumstances should necessarily entail upon us. Such conduct might flow from the rankest pride, and be the

mark of an utterly disobedient spirit, choosing a way for itself, instead of receiving its way from God. We are not to follow Christ in the letter, nor strive to know Him after the flesh, but we are to have His mind, and to walk in His Spirit.

Our humility is to be proved as His was—first, by subordination to our equals. The equality of all redeemed men is a foundation truth. Difference of order and rank amongst the redeemed in the body of Christ is another. The Church is a family of brethren, and also a hierarchy of kings and priests; a nation of freemen, and yet of servants; free from all men, yet serving all men in the Lord; we are not brought into the Church to work out our own salvation merely, nor yet the salvation of other men; but that God may work in us to will and to do in behalf of His good pleasure. He has a plan to accomplish, which no one knows perfectly but He Himself; the highest created mind understands but a part of it, and that imperfectly. That plan embraces our salvation indeed, but it embraces a great deal more besides. Our work in the Church is to submit to God, that He may develop His plan and bring it to its consummation by means of us. The body of Christ is His help, through the instrumentality of which He brings His good pleasure to pass. God knows what He has created and predestinated every man unto. He knows what we are fit for, according to His purpose concerning us; and in the place where we can help Him He sets us. True humility consists in learning that place and keeping it, and letting the Spirit of God use us in it. Choosing a place for ourselves, and labouring intensely in it, may result in our achieving great exploits, and leaving behind us monuments as lasting as the pyramids, and a glory as bright as man's breath can make; but in the day of judgment we may be proved to have been after all only mighty hinderers of God, and splendid obstructions to His work. Happy is the man who finds out his niche in the Temple of the Lord, and abides as a pillar in His House for



ever. To learn our place in the body of Christ, and to do, and suffer, and enjoy what that place brings to us, is alone humility.

Voluntary humility, though it should introduce us into angelic forms of service, will present us for our reward in the end amongst the angels who kept not their first estate, but aspired to some condition of their own election.

As we may not bring confusion into the body of Christ, neither may we cause confusion in the dispensations of God. Christ came first to suffer; He will come again to reign. We are now to be witnesses of His sufferings, by-and-by we shall be partakers of His glory. He witnessed of His Kingdom before Pilate and the Jews, but He wore no crown upon His head to prove it. He did not surround Himself with the things which the common sense of mankind attaches to the idea of royalty. He did not make the outward condition the index of the inward glory, but quite the reverse. The manger of Bethlehem was no outward token of the Son that was born. The ass, and the colt, and the crowd of common people, were poor outward signs of the King of kings riding into Jerusalem, followed by the hosts of His willing people. The outward illustrations of His greatness were always mean and contemptible; the inward proofs which shone forth from Him were mighty and glorious. Flesh was not either allured or overwhelmed by any of the things which flesh accounts beautiful and excellent; but to the spirit of believing man God was manifested in the words and works that were Divine. He did not borrow from the world all that it could furnish, to make a picture or a symbol of His glory; but he opened the Heavens and let the glory descend from thence upon Him, that it might show Him, and the nature and the end of His work. He waited for His risen body, to put glory upon it. The body of humiliation He covered with no glory, but subjected it to contempt and shame.

The Church should not affect outward glory now. She

should manifest, as her Head did, the Heavenly glory. Eating His flesh and drinking His blood we shall become what we ought to be, and shall show forth what we are to the glory of God our Father. The signs of Christ appearing in His Church shall be known of those whom the Father draweth unto Him. The acknowledgment shall be made to the praise of God, that "not by might, nor by power," as men understand these things, are great works done and glorious triumphs gained ; but by the Spirit of the Lord, by the power of His Christ. Amen.

## XXXVIII.

GOOD FRIDAY. *Sermon*  
*Chgo 1945.*

THERE are three great seasons in the Christian year, Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. In the first we commemorate the Incarnation of the Son of God; in the second His Substitution before God for those whose nature He had assumed is the leading fact; and in the third we celebrate our Incorporation with Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. Incarnation, Substitution, and Incorporation form the triple foundation of our blessedness in Christ.

To-day we bear witness of the second. The gospel for this day records the death of Christ, and the epistle tells us why He died. Whatever men thought they were doing when they put Christ to death, God intended by the act what is asserted and seven times repeated in this Epistle to the Hebrews. Seven times this Epistle reiterates that Christ made a sacrifice for sin, and that this sacrifice was made by His death. By Himself He purged our sins, and then sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Before He could sit down in God's presence, at His right hand, in the nature which had sinned, He expiated in that nature the sin which it had committed. Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins and then for the people's; for this He did *once* when He offered up Himself. He put Himself, and the people whose nature He bore, in a right condition before God, to receive at His hands resurrection from the dead and the Kingdom everlasting, by that which He did *once* and could never repeat.

“By His own blood He entered in *once* into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands . . . but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that He should offer Himself often . . . but now *once* in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men *once* to die, so Christ was *once offered* to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the *second* time without sin unto salvation.” He died *once*, “the just for the unjust.” The just was substituted for the unjust, the innocent suffered instead of the guilty. Christ’s death was vicarious. The enemy is working mightily in the present day to steal this word from the heart of the Church. Woe be unto her if he succeed ! How shall any man ever stand before God if of some man, the representative of all the rest, it cannot be said, This one hath magnified the law of God and made it honourable ; he hath obeyed all its requirements, and endured all its penalty ? Let us hold fast what is signified to us by that which we behold on the material altar, in our material church or place of assembly. What do we see upon the altar ? Two things, the record of Christ’s life, the memorial of His death. You see a book and consecrated bread and wine. The book is the Divine history of the Son of God in flesh, whereby His righteousness and innocence are declared ; whereby through four witnesses God commends Him unto us as His own Perfect One, the “Lamb without blemish and without spot.” The material things lying near the sacred record are the holy signs of His most precious body and blood ; of His body broken and His blood poured out ; of His body and blood separated from one another by death ; they are the emblems of His passion, they show forth His death till He come. Incarnation and Substitution are set before us by these dumb signs : Incarnation first, that the innocent victim in human nature might be produced ; then Substitution of that innocent one in

death for the sins of all His fellow-men. The signs on the altar proclaim what He saith Himself, "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God;" and the result of His coming, as interpreted by His servant, "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, *once* for all."

Christ died not as a martyr only, but as a sacrifice for sin. Let us hear finally the writer of this epistle.

"Every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this *Man*" or *Priest* (there is no Greek word for man or priest either, but only the word "*this*," this one, as contrasted with the others before referred to) this one, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool; for by *one* offering He hath *perfected* for ever them that are sanctified."

Thus fully doth this epistle, chosen for the day when Christ's death is commemorated, set forth the meaning of His death.

What remains for us but that we should make the practical use of this doctrine, which the epistle also urges upon us? "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest set over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."

God has provided a sacrifice. He has given us an High Priest. Let us thank Him for His benefits. Let us have confidence in His love. Let us come to Him with a true heart, as children at full speed rush into the arms of their parents, of whose love they are assured, whom they love and trust. That which makes our hearts untrue and distrustful, even conscious guilt, let us be delivered from it by the

sprinkling of the blood which was once shed for us by Him who shed it. Whatever has darkened and oppressed our soul, and discouraged us in the service of God, let us bring it to Him who is the Sacrifice and the High Priest, that He may sprinkle His blood upon us by the means which He has appointed; that He may give us absolution and full remission. On this day the Church prays for Jews, and Turks, and infidels, and heretics, for sins of the deepest dye; because she hath specially before her eyes this day the sin-offering which avails for all. This is the first practical lesson, the first of three. The second is, "Having our bodies washed with pure water." Let us hold fast the confession of our hope "without wavering (for He is faithful that promised)." Let us never give up our hope, and that we may not, let us be prepared for its enjoyment. We are called to a feast, let us use the laver, that we may be cleansed wholly. The third lesson is concerning love, as the two preceding treat of faith and hope. "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works." Love is kindled by seeing, and good works are wrought by love. And that we may see one another, "let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhort one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." This faith which obtains the blood of sprinkling, this hope which shews the need for the Holy Ghost, this love which brings the brethren together, and holds them together till they enter as one body into the Kingdom, God expects from us. Let us not mock Him with the offering of other gifts if these be withheld. Let us be sure that everything which our hands can bring shall be acceptable if bearing their impress. Amen.

## XXXIX.

### EASTER DAY.

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*Ep.*—COL. iii. 1. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xx. 1.

ON this day the Lord began to enter upon “the joy that was set before Him,” on account of which “He endured the cross, despising the shame.” His own resurrection from the dead was the first part of His hope. The resurrection of His body, the Church, is the second part of it. His Kingdom, to the participation of which His Church shall be admitted after “the resurrection of the just,” is the third part. The last and crowning part is His delivering up of “the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.” “Then” (the consummation of blessedness to the obedient one) “shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

In the 16th Psalm David speaks not of himself, but of Christ, as was taught to the Church once and for ever, in the first discourse after the descent of the Holy Ghost, by the chief amongst the apostles. “I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” David being a prophet, and seeing this before, “spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption.”

Here is the resurrection from the dead, and the path of life, which there begins, but never ends; which led Him who rose again into the highest heavens, where the fulness of joy in God's presence awaited Him; which led Him to the right hand of God, where He should find and from whence He should bestow God's pleasures, even the river of His pleasures—the river of life for evermore.

“We declare unto you glad tidings” (said another apostle, the apostle to the Gentiles), “how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the 2nd Psalm, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee. And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.” Here is resurrection from the dead, and the kingdom ensuing upon it which cannot be moved, typified by the kingdom of David, which was not forfeited like that of Saul; the kingdom of peace, in which all the blessings bestowed upon man by God's mercy shall be made sure to him for ever. Thus in Jerusalem and Antioch of old did men sent of God interpret the prophecies concerning the resurrection of Christ.

Once more hear St. Paul in Athens declaring the resurrection and the meaning of it. “God hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” God bespeaks men's confidence by raising His Son from the dead in true manhood, and giving Him, and manhood in Him, the highest place in the universe under God. He offers faith to all in raising Christ from the dead. He proposes to all men a basis of mutual confidence between them and God. He says unto all men, “Behold what confidence you may place in God. Behold what confidence God has placed in men; what trust He has reposed in the man



who has obeyed Him ; what trust He will repose in all men who come to God by Him."

God says to men, "Have faith in Me, and I will make you such as I can have faith in." He will commit Himself to those who shall be created anew in His image. Jesus Christ raised from the dead is the last Adam in whom the perfect image of God is seen. The new creature in Christ Jesus shall possess the confidence of its Creator for evermore. Now that Christ is risen from the dead, what waits He for ? For what does the whole creation wait ? For the resurrection of that body which Holy Scripture declares to be His fulness—the blessed Eve whom the last Adam desireth to behold.

From the time that the resurrection of Christ was made known the Church hath been exhorted, by all whose mission and inspiration were of God, to press forward unto her own resurrection. The language of them all has been, We who "have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body." The freedom of Christ has reached our spirits ; we long for the time when it shall reach our bodies also. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." We long to be "clothed upon with our *house* which is from heaven." The present body is a *tent* in a wilderness ; it must soon be taken down. The future body is a *house* in our inheritance ; a house builded by God, and to last for ever ; a house the model of which is already in heaven, where the perfect Man is seen, whence the perfect Man shall in due time come forth to "change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

The hope of the Church must be to attain to that whereunto the Head of the Church hath attained. He has not merely attained to a happy death ; He has gone beyond that, even unto a glorious resurrection. So far must our hope go

forward. A happy death is good. Paul, who longed for the resurrection with an intensity more approaching to the desire of his Lord than that perhaps of any other, said also, "*To me to die is gain.*" I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ." The same faith which longs for the resurrection rejoices also to say at the hour of death, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." But whilst the death of the righteous should not be regarded as their loss, but as their gain, yet all the righteous who have in their hearts the love of all the brethren will earnestly desire that which brings not gain to themselves individually and to a part of their being, but that change rather which many shall enjoy together, and which shall make all perfect, for the full service which unto God they desire to render.

The epistle for the day urges us to set our affections upon, and to seek all that can be hoped for from, Him who sits at God's right hand. What has He to give? Regeneration and the Kingdom—the Holy Ghost, who effects the one and gives the earnest of the other—the Divine constitution of the Church, which affords the Holy Spirit liberty of action—all the ordinances of grace by which He works.

The epistle is taken from a context which warns us against fanatical attempts to please God by improving, by adorning, by developing the natural, the merely created. False teaching had begun to set up Greeks, and Romans, and Jews as models for Christians to fashion themselves by; nay, it took a higher and more daring flight, fixing the eye of the Church on the highest created excellence, stimulating the ambition of fallen men to imitate, and aim at even angelical perfection. In the midst of the spreading delusion, the voice of Divine admonition was heard: Hold fast the Head—"ye are complete in Him." Blessed are they who labour, to make their brethren know and prove the power of Christ's resurrection. God has within a short space of time removed from the midst of us two faithful men who so laboured. We are constrained to cry, "Help, Lord, for the godly man

ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." Our brethren departed were amongst the first who said unto us, in these last days, "Christ is risen indeed." They said it, and their gifts shewed it; they refreshed and comforted many; many will welcome them into the everlasting habitations. We gratefully commemorate them, we sorrow for their loss, but we rejoice to believe that they rest in peace, and wait, with all their holy brethren, for the day of their joyful resurrection. May we who survive them hold fast our hope unto the end, and be accounted worthy to see with them, in peace and joy unspeakable, the appearing and Kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory ascribed, for ever and ever. Amen.

## XL.

### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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*Ep.*—I JOHN. v. 4. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN XX. 19.

THE epistle calls upon the Church to overcome the world, and the gospel presents unto us the Head of the Church giving to His disciples the power by which the victory should be gained.

The Church has to overcome the world in two ways, first defensively, and then offensively. To overcome defensively is to refuse to be led into sin by the world; to overcome offensively is to drive sin out of the world and to gain possession for God of the ground which sin defiles. Now is the time for the first part of this warfare; after the resurrection will be the period of the other. The world shall be conquered first in this double way, and then shall it be ruled by its conquerors. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." The Firstborn overcame first, and all who have Him have power to overcome. It is only faith which can see that He has overcome and will yet overcome. To sight the world is still unsubdued. The rulers of the world combined against Him at the first; the last cry of the kingdoms of the earth will be, "Let us break His bands asunder, let us cast away His cords from us." Yet He shall conquer the world and rule it for God. "The heathen shall be given unto Him for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." "All kings shall bow down before Him, all nations shall serve Him."

The world could not corrupt Him. He shall cleanse the world from evil spirits and from wicked men, and when that work is finished, "God's will shall be done upon the earth

as it is done in Heaven." The world cannot corrupt and prevail against those who trust in Him, "for this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." That which was merely created of God was overcome, because it ceased to trust in Him who made it; that which is born of God hath faith in Him, and by faith receives power and victory. Before the Church is called to withstand the allurements of the world and to resist the temptations of the evil one in whom the world lieth, it is united to Him who is in the highest place of all, and has all power committed unto Him. On the first day of His own victory He showed Himself unto the chief ministers of His Church with the power of God in His hands; "He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." By Him they would be taught the worthiness of their Lord and Saviour, and the worthlessness of all His enemies; by Him they would know the love of God and enter into the peace of God which passeth understanding. Possessing Him they would be cleansed from sin themselves; dispensing Him to others they would deliver them from their sins also. Thus would they, and the Church with them, be prepared to contend with the world and enabled to overcome it.

If the Church will not receive the Holy Ghost, she shall not overcome the world, whatever craft she may employ, whatever force she may possess. Rather in the day when the world shall attain to its last condition of pride, and shall be as "a beast whose body is covered with names of blasphemy," the Church which refuses to be filled with the Holy Ghost shall become the prophet of that beast, the worshipper of the people who have utterly cast off the fear of God.

The Lord said to His apostles first, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" then He said to them, "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them." Men have tried to separate these things, God will have them united. The first word spoken by the Lord after His resurrection remains good for

the whole dispensation, "Retain amongst you the Holy Spirit, that you may be delivered from your sins." Some members of the Church have never ceased to pray, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy holy name." It is not strange that God should answer this prayer; therefore it is not strange that He should call forth into use every instrumentality which He employs for the diffusion and liberty of His Holy Spirit.

A people delivered from sin by the Spirit of Christ will be the only worthy assertors of the claims of Christ for the confidence and homage of all; they alone can overcome the world, being delivered from that which constitutes the world's strength. Blessed are they who use in faith all the means of grace, who drink the water of salvation out of every well, whose hearts are opened to the sacred fire, however conveyed. Their sins are washed away, their dross is consumed, "they fight the good fight." God allows them to take His name into their lips, He accepts their worship; their advocacy of His cause, their reproof of His enemies are pleasing in His sight. May God give us all this wisdom to receive and to continue receiving the best gifts which in our time He would bestow; then shall we loathe what His enemies can offer, in comparison with that which we receive from Him; then shall we abound in thanksgivings unto Him, and our prayer shall come up before Him as incense, and our service be acceptable unto Him, as the evening sacrifice. Amen.

## XLI.

### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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*Ep.*—I PETER ii. 19. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN x. 11.

CHRIST is first our Healer, then is He our Shepherd and Bishop. By His stripes we are healed; not by the stripes which He inflicts, but by the stripes which He endured. The word is in the singular number in the Greek, "By whose *stripe* ye were healed." One stripe especially, one deadly wound, is referred to, the same which is spoken of in the immediate context, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness." To be healed is to be delivered from that disease which threatens our life. Sin is the disease which brings upon us death, death temporal and death eternal. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." Because He bare our sins He died upon the accursed tree. Because He died we are delivered from death; from temporal death as a penal infliction, from eternal death altogether. His wound healed us, His death saves us from dying. "He that believeth in Me shall not see death;" he shall not have death before his eyes at all times, but rather One conquering death shall he behold, "by dying abolishing death, and swallowing it up in victory."

"By His stripe we have been healed." He redeemed us from the curse of the law, dying for us; He reconciled us unto God by His death. By His death He "destroyed him that had the power of death," "and delivered those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." He died to heal us, He lives to be our Shepherd

and Bishop. The living Shepherd feeds and tends a living flock; He stands and feeds in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God, and those whom He feeds shall abide. They shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of His hand. He feeds His flock in the strength of the Lord; He watches over them with the oversight of God; He folds His sheep where He Himself is folded, where He hath found His rest, even at the right hand of God. From that stronghold of the Almighty He sendeth help, from that high watch-tower He looketh forth upon all the way His people have to journey, over all the wants and difficulties and enemies which they have to encounter. He ensures perfection of happiness and fitness for its enjoyment to those who will know His pastorship and accept His oversight. As the victim in our place, the Lamb slain for our sins, He set us free from the curse of God, being made a curse for us; as the Shepherd and Bishop He ministers to us the fulness of God's blessing, He gives us God's blessing and exercises a charge over what He gives, and over those who receive it. The Lord is a Shepherd, and He chooseth those whom He will to convey to the experience of His flock the blessings of His care and bounty. The Lord is the Bishop of His Church, and He puts that name upon men by whom He would make His people to know the blessing of His oversight and guidance.

Blessed are they who live under and avail themselves of the blessings of His pastorship and oversight. Let not the spirit of pride, of independence and unbelief, make the people neglectful of their privileges. Woe to those who feed themselves, who are their own shepherds, who are wise in their own conceits. All, even the wisest, the strongest, and the best of the children of men, are as sheep going astray, until they are turned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. The epistle for the day addresses itself to a condition of human society where the pastorship and oversight of Christ are especially needed. It speaks to those who have done



well and whose well-doing has not been appreciated ; to those who have faithfully served and their services have not been requited, who for their love have met a return of hatred. It says to them, Compensate yourselves for the neglect, ingratitude and hatred of men, by turning yourselves more entirely unto Him who rejoiceth to call Himself your Shepherd and Bishop, though he be raised to the highest Heaven and be seated at the right hand of God. Unrequited, unremunerated service is comforted in the epistle not by exhortation to contend with strong hope of success with the selfish exacter and cruel taskmaster, but by urgent entreaty to turn away from the exacter and taskmaster upon the earth to the Shepherd and Bishop in the Heavens.

Would that the epistle for this day might be read aright by the Church, threatened with the loss of wealth, honour, and distinction at the hands of those to whom it alleges its service has been faithfully rendered. The more faithful the service, the more strictly does the lesson apply. Are men stretching forth the hand of the leveller and the spoiler against the Church of God ? Let the destruction and spoliation turn the heart of the Church more unreservedly to Him who will establish her with the stability of God and endow her with the fulness of the Holy Ghost.

They who are mourning because the things men's hands have given are by the hands of men taken away, let them consider what God bestowed upon them in the beginning, when He raised their Head and Representative from the prison-house of death to His own throne in Heaven, and from Him so highly exalted sent down unto His body the gift of the Holy Ghost. In the days through which we are passing God began to enrich, before man had arisen to despoil.

Have men lightly esteemed God's gifts and over-estimated the wealth and honour of the world ? In the greatness of His bounty, God gave ; in the greatness of His mercy, He taketh away.

He would still save ; He would yet prove the richness of His grace to those who have accounted other masters of more worth than He ; other wages of more worth than His. Now that His judgments are in the earth may the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. In the day when the Church is taught not to trust in man nor to put confidence in princes may she turn to Him who is unchangeable, who giveth "a hope that maketh not ashamed," "whose gifts and calling are without repentance." Amen.

## XLII.

### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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*Ep.*—I PET. ii. 19. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN X. 11.

THE God of *peace* has brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, *through the blood* of the everlasting covenant. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the great and signal proof that God was at peace with His creature man. At the instigation of the evil one man in the beginning of his existence took up arms against God. Until this hostility was renounced by man, God could not be at peace with him. He might be merciful unto him and show pity, but He could not be at peace with one in open rebellion. Nay, more, until the sin involved in the hostility was expiated God could not be at peace with the sinner. In the life of Jesus Christ, God saw the hostility renounced on the part of human nature. In the man Christ Jesus He saw nothing that He could find fault with, nothing that He was bound by all His holy character to withstand and to make war upon. He saw perfect obedience, the human heart loving its God perfectly, the human will in entire harmony with the Divine will, the human spirit in purest and most uninterrupted communion with God's Spirit, the human mind, to the full extent of its capacity, filled with and consenting to the mind of God, the human body in all its powers doing the will of God, rendering perfect obedience. God looked upon His well-beloved Son, the man Christ Jesus, and saw in Him the Lamb without blemish and without spot. He said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." God cannot be at peace with sin; it, and that which

harbours it, He must hate. In the man Christ Jesus was no sin. He condemned sin in flesh ; He was tempted in all points like those whose flesh and blood He assumed, but though He was tempted He was without sin. Manhood as represented in Jesus Christ did not harbour God's enemy, but did honour, and obey, and worship God Himself. Therefore God was at peace with His creature, in which He saw not rebellion, but obedience ; not sin against God, but God's own righteousness. But although God saw in the man Christ Jesus nothing to be offended with, but everything to be at peace with, yet manhood, which Christ assumed, had sinned and therefore must die. God saw in Christ the creature not sinning, but still the creature which had sinned. Its sin once committed, and all the sinfulness contracted by once sinning, must be atoned for. The wages of sin is death ; that which sinned must renounce its sin, must extirpate it, must obtain entire deliverance from it, must render the perfect obedience originally demanded, and after doing all this must die to expiate the guilt which has darkened its history ; though delivered from sin, yet, because chargeable with sin once committed, it must die. Therefore the Lamb without blemish and without spot must be also the Lamb slain. When the Lamb without blemish and without spot becomes the Lamb slain, then is God the God of peace. He loved us, He pitied us, He abounded in mercy towards us before and for ever, but now He is at peace with us ; that with which He was at war, and must for ever be at war, has been taken out of our being, and His Son in our nature has died, the just for the unjust. The man who is God in our flesh has obeyed, and after obeying has atoned for the disobedience with which the nature assumed by Him was chargeable. Now God is at peace with that nature which His Son has made obedient, the offence of which His Son has expiated. He is at peace with manhood, and therefore He has brought again from the dead the new head and representative of manhood, and has made Him the great Shepherd of the

sheep, Himself the first of the folded flock, dwelling on high in the holiest place of all, and thence calling unto Himself the whole flock of God.

Christ destroyed upon earth the works of the devil, and now in Heaven and from Heaven He works the work of God. He has destroyed sin and overcome death. Now He gives eternal life and the Spirit of Holiness to those who obey Him, who are turned unto Him as the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. He is the great Shepherd, who has all power in Heaven and in earth. He is the good Shepherd, who knoweth His sheep and has laid down His life for them. He knows the flock, and He knows Him to whom the flock belongs. He knows the uses to which God will put His Church; He will make the Church fit for God's service. The faithful Shepherd shall cause the flock and the Owner of the flock to meet at the time known unto God. In that day our joy shall be full. In the hope of that day let us continually wait upon God, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, by Jesus Christ, shall make us perfect in every good work, appointing to us our place and establishing us in it, so that we may do His will and attain to that which is well pleasing in His sight, unto our true and everlasting glory. Amen.

## XLIII.

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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*Ep.*—I PET. ii. 11. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xvi. 16.

THE epistle for this day calls upon all Christians as strangers and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts, and to submit themselves to all the ordinances of men for the Lord's sake. The gospel presents the hope of the strangers and pilgrims, to be realised at the coming again of the Lord, and designates the interval of pilgrimage as a "little while." Last Sunday's epistle comforted the Church under unmerited suffering; the epistle of this day instructs us how to escape all suffering except that which is unmerited, namely, by being masters of ourselves and obedient to the ordinances of life in the fear of the Lord. The most to be expected from the world is exemption from persecution, and quiet circumstances, in order that we may serve God. These two advantages are enjoyed by the Church in this land at present. How long they may be continued unto you who can tell? Now is your time, under the protection of human government, or perhaps its indifference, while men favour you or forget, to do with all your might whatsoever work your hands find to do. Record many prayers in the book of God's remembrance for the good of all your brethren while liberty to pray is conceded to you, and the house of daily worship is before you with doors wide open. Present joyfully the memorial of Christ's sacrifice before God every day, for it may be that soon the daily sacrifice will be taken away. Reckon upon no higher place in the absence of the Lord than the condition of the stranger and pilgrim, but rejoice while you are as

strangers secure from outrage, and as pilgrims allowed to go on your way unmolested. When the Lord returns to this earth He will not come into it as a stranger, but as a possessor, and you shall possess with Him. The gospel for the day would fix our thoughts upon that hope.

Three comings of the Lord were before the disciples when the words in the gospel were spoken unto them. 1st. His appearing to them after His resurrection. 2nd. His coming unto them in the power and presence of the Holy Ghost. 3rd. His personal appearing in His glorified condition at the termination of the work of preparing His Church by His Holy Spirit. The first of these, which was the matter immediately in hand, the disciples could not understand, and did not expect. He promised it unto them, but they did not believe Him. He appointed unto them a place where He should meet them after His resurrection, and bade them meet Him there. But they did not keep the appointment. Their minds were pre-occupied, and His words, so plainly spoken, could not enter into them. However, when they knew He was risen indeed, when they saw Him eat and drink after His resurrection, and heard Him teach during forty days, then, being assured of the first of His three comings, they waited in joyful hope for the second, and being all with one accord in one place, they duly experienced His second presence amongst them and in them by the Holy Ghost. After that, we know from their writings, which we hold in our hands, and from their preaching and testimony recorded in them, how they hoped and longed for the third event, even His glorious personal advent. When the first step was made the rest of the progress was comparatively easy. First steps are decisive ones, and are generally the most difficult. We know that Christ has risen. We know that He has come in the Spirit. We ought to be partaking with those who have gone before us in the earnest desire for His glorious personal coming. The gospel tells us by a strong figure how intense that desire should be. The woman

longing for the birth of her child is the Lord's illustration of His Church's desire for His coming again into the world, for the birth of the whole body which shall meet Him, or rather come with Him in that day, for they met with Him before and were united unto Him of His flesh and of His bones. The Church before the glorious advent of her Lord shall long for His appearing with an earnestness which must justify this expressive metaphor of the Holy Scripture. That longing will be the mark of the Lord's work in the last days. The contempt of that hope will be the mark of the last scoffers.

What will the Church be like in the time of the end? Let the Head of the Church answer first according to the record by Matthew, Like unto wise virgins going forth to meet a bridegroom. Let Him answer according to Luke, Like unto a bereaved widow crying for deliverance from one who hath oppressed her, and obtaining it. Let Him answer according to John, Like unto a woman who is in travail and hath sorrow because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born unto the world. How shall that mark appear? How shall we be brought to desire exceedingly the return in glory of the Lord our Saviour? What brought the first disciples into such a condition? The same shall bring us. The Lord spake two words of especial comfort to His Church: the first, "Lo I am with you always;" the other, "Behold, I come quickly." In proportion as the blessings contained in the first assurance are experienced and appreciated, the blessings contained in the second will be hoped for. To hope for Him as for one who is far away and altogether absent is not the Christian hope; it is no better than the faint desire which some of the heathen themselves possessed of a deliverer who should some day come and accomplish what the first promise to fallen man had given the hope of. We are called to hope for Him as for one who is even now with us, though we see Him not; whose flesh we eat, whose



blood we drink. If the Church will receive from Him all that He meant to convey when He said, "Lo, I am with you always," then will her cry indeed be the response to the cry of the Spirit, and that word will be fulfilled, the "Spirit and the Bride say come, even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Having in us the Spirit of the Father and of Christ we shall understand the meaning of the words in the gospel of this day, "A little while and ye shall see Me, for I go unto the Father." Because I go to the Father it shall be a little while, for He, seeing the first of His Sons, will command that the rest be raised up speedily, and He will send the first gathered to gather all the rest, and then appear at the head of them, that the Father may delight in beholding all His children together. Amen.

## XLIV.

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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*Ep.*—I PETER ii. 11. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xvi. 16.

THE epistle says that during the present dispensation the followers of Christ are "strangers and pilgrims." The gospel represents them as men of a sorrowful spirit, waiting for an event which shall turn their mourning into a joy which can never be taken away. The epistle shows to us the desires which we should resist and suppress, the gospel those which we should indulge even to intensity. We are warned against the desires which are incompatible with the condition of "the stranger and pilgrim." The stranger here means the man who is not in his own house, a wanderer from his home; the pilgrim the man in a foreign land banished from his own country. While we are in the present body we are not in our own house; until we see the "new Heavens and the new earth" we are not in our own country. A man is careful about his own house, he risks his life for his own country; he meddles not with the house of another, nor troubles himself with the land of strangers. The flesh lusts for the present world, the spirit longs for the world to come. The flesh lusts to reign with the present kings of the earth, or to reign over them, the spirit longs to reign with Christ over the inheritance which is not yet manifested. While all fleshly lusts war against the soul, either to slay its life or to rob it of that which was given to it for its life to enjoy, war always threatens your life or substance, or both. Fleshly lusts kindle a war which endangers the life and substance of the soul. But the fleshly lusts especially meant in the epistle

for this day are those which should embroil the Church with the powers of the present world, which should make the members of the Church bad subjects of civil government. Because Christians were professedly labouring to bring in and establish a new Kingdom upon earth they were easily liable to the charge of being "evildoers," disturbers of the existing order of society, and enemies of the commonwealth. Their profession was in danger of becoming a snare unto them, and in fact it did so become, and him whose name especially amongst the apostles of Christ has been inwoven with the sin did God employ more, perhaps, than any other of His servants to warn the Church against it. For Peter has been claimed the rule over the kingdoms of the present world. That claim has made the Church an "evildoer" against the peace of the world. It has taken away her "honest conversation among the Gentiles." It has hindered the men of the world from seeing the Church as the community placed under the immediate oversight of God, ruled and administered by Him in the interest of all His creatures, to be His centre of blessing to all the inhabitants of the earth, "the salt of the earth, the light of the world." God expected that the men even of this world would glorify Him when they should see in the Church the results of His oversight, of His episcopate, as the text expresses it. St. Peter warns against the sins especially which should obstruct that consummation. One little word, but very important, which is found in the Greek has not been translated into the English in our common version. There should be a "therefore" after "submit yourselves;" this word binds the whole context together and gives great exactness to the meaning of the words. Let not the accusers of the Church, says the Apostle, have any ground for alleging that it is insubordinate towards civil government, that it is an "evildoer" against the interests of human society. Let men who prefer such accusations be proved to be men without sense and without information. Let your "well doing" muzzle them, as dogs

are muzzled that they may cease from barking. The temporal power which the Church in the hour of her temptation bore away as a prize from weak rulers, or accepted as a bribe from strong usurpers, seems at the present time to be about to escape from her possession for ever. Before the taking away of the temporal kingdom, which men's hands yielded in weakness, or in wickedness bestowed, God has vouchsafed in the midst of His people a testimony and an earnest of the true Kingdom to which men are called by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church must be seen to be a witness for a kingdom. She either holds the counterfeit kingdom in present possession or the true Kingdom in hope and earnest. The recovery of the hope and earnest of the true is the sign that the false possession is about to be shaken and removed. God's judgments are in the earth, our eyes behold them. He shaketh the Heavens and the earth, "that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." "Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear." What man gave man is taking away. "The inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," He will give whose gifts are not recalled. The interval between the making of the promise and its fulfilment He calls "a little while," and yet it has covered thousands of years; but it is a little while compared with eternal duration; and the possession of the Comforter, who gives the assurance and foretaste of it, beguiles the weariness of the way and the long time of waiting. That which we wait for is not wholly without us. From the womb of the travailing woman shall issue the crown of her hope, the compensation of her anguish. Christ is formed in the Church, the hope of glory. Those who are filled with His Spirit are enabled to long intensely for the Kingdom, and yet to wait patiently for it. In our right condition we are not, as those upon the earth, looking for one to descend unto us from Heaven, but we are as those already

ascended unto Him and seated with Him in the heavenly places, waiting for Him to come forth, that we may come forth with Him, unto the manifestation of the Sons of God, which shall be fulfilled when the souls that are with Him shall be united to the bodies for which "He comes again a second time without sin unto salvation." All the time which elapses between the day of our sealing unto the inheritance, and the day of our entrance upon its final possession, can be made to our experience "a little while" by Him who gave that name to the interval. There is a present communion which at once quickens hope and takes heaviness from waiting. Amen.

## XLV.

### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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*Ep.*—JAMES i. 17. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xvi. 5.

THE power of God's Word, the work of His Spirit, are the subjects of the epistle and gospel for this day. The Word and the Spirit cannot be dissociated. Men are eminently *now* striving to separate what God has joined together. On the one hand, some cling to and hug, so to speak, the letter of Holy Scripture, while declining and evading the work of the Holy Ghost; others labour mightily to depreciate Holy Scripture, all the while pleading for the highest form of spiritual religion, and seeming to exult in the conscious possession of the deepest and most satisfying communion with the Living God. What Christ did, rebukes both. What did He first? He commended mightily to His chosen disciples the Scriptures of Truth; during His ministry before His death, during His wonderful intercourse with them after His resurrection, before His ascension unto God's right hand. Christ prepared His apostles for the Day of Pentecost by teaching them to estimate duly, and to understand rightly, Holy Scripture. After opening their understanding to understand the Scripture, He still charged them to tarry in "Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high." The epistle for this day points as it were to His work during the forty days; the gospel to His crowning and consummating work on the Day of Pentecost. By the first action He made His disciples to exclaim, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened unto us the Scriptures?" By the second He enabled them, in the fulness of joy, to testify continually,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings . . . in Christ.” He “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Now are we “builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

God’s work of enlargement, of endowment, of sanctification entire, by His Holy Spirit, which He has wrought, and would yet more abundantly work in these days in which we live, He began amongst a people who had diligently read, who had been ably and carefully instructed in the written Word. Yea, He began it in a land where His Word had been signally honoured, and at a time when that honour put upon His Word had attained to its greatest height. He will continue to bestow more and more abundantly the Spirit of His grace upon those who, amidst hypocrisy on one side of them, and increasing blasphemy on the other, cleave to His faithful promises, written long ago for all generations; and whilst cleaving to the promise, do not shut their hearts against that which was promised, but open them wide, that they may be filled with the blessing. Wickedness is almost come to the full in our day; the Holy Ghost, the gift of the risen, of the ascended Saviour, *has* been despised, and *now* contempt is put upon the Word, upon which the Lord of Glory, the faithful Witness, put such honour, which He did so magnify.

How greatly is the Word of God commended to our reverence in the epistle for this day. It is the seed of life by which we are begotten of God, in order to be the firstfruits of His creatures, the Word of Truth. After our creation the word of falsehood from him who was a liar and murderer from the beginning was the vehicle of death to the human race. By God’s grace unto us after our fall, the Word of Truth is the vehicle of life. To be begotten by the Word, to be born of the Spirit, is the double preparation for the Kingdom of God. A wonderful birth was given to the Incarnate

Word in that day when He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." A birth no less wonderful awaits those who are now begotten by the Word of Truth which He ministers. He gave His disciples of old, *first* the Word of Truth, *then* the Spirit of Power. He follows the same order for ever. There is first the begetting, then the birth. Our spirits are born now. They see *now* the Kingdom of God; they *now* enter into it. They are conversant with another world than that into which they have been introduced by natural birth. They count that world their own; they have received a life which fits them for its use and enjoyment; for it they have renounced the world with which they are united through the bodily senses. Our souls are born now from above; soon our bodies shall hear from above the voice that shall summon them into the likeness of Christ's glorious body. Then the birth shall be complete; the birth of water, the birth of spirit, the birth of purity, the birth of power and glory. Then shall be fulfilled all that the Word of the Gospel announced, all that by the Sacrament of Baptism was signified, and to faith sealed and conveyed. Brethren, let us rejoice in the Word of Truth, as a man rejoices and exults in his life, in the consciousness of its enjoyment; and let us long for the glorious birth which awaits us; let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom it is effected, but let us yield unto Him that He may finish His work, that He may accomplish the number of God's elect, that He may hasten and cause us to behold God's Kingdom.

"Be *swift* to hear;" swift as one who flees from destruction; swift as one who runs for his life and for every prize which makes life worth possessing. Be swift to hear, and hear not as one who soon lets slip that which he has heard; but hear and hold fast that which you have received, as a tree holds fast the graft which has been inserted into it by the hand of the husbandman. The tree is wounded that the



graft may enter. Let the Word of God enter into you, though it may wound in the entering. Spare not the "filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness," which would choke the ear of the soul and bar the entrance of the truth. Let the new graft enter into the soul, that its barrenness of good may be changed into fruitfulness, that the sour and poisoned juices of nature may be healed and sweetened by the sap of that graft which is taken from the tree of life.

"Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls." The soul is lost which is not saved by the engrafted Word. How shall they be saved who despise that which Christ would engraft, who despise the ministries and means by which He would effect the engrafting? The Word of Truth by which you are begotten, the engrafted Word by which your souls are saved, despise not, ye people in covenant with God; especially ye young of the flock, who even in your infancy are "planted in the house of the Lord, that you may flourish in the courts of our God." If in some respects the order of the Lord seems to have been reversed in your case, you having (before you could understand the Gospel by your minds) been admitted to all its privileges and blessings in your holy baptism; still, though the order seems reversed, you may be assured of it that the double work cannot be dispensed with. Christ gave the Word to His disciples, also He gave the Spirit. He must do the same with you, or you shall have no part in Him in the day when those that are *Christ's* shall be raised at His coming. He has given you His Spirit, in measure, in your baptism; you repeated the Creed unto Him at that time by your sponsors; you must now learn it and repeat it with your own lips, and you must enter into the meaning of what you repeat; you must know the words in their spirit, and life, and power.

Believe the Word of God; let it dwell in you richly, so shall you be able to entertain the Comforter; through you He will have liberty of action; through you He will be able

to confute the world upon every point of controversy between it and God ; through you He will be able to glorify Him whom the world rejected ; to testify of Him as the Father of the Everlasting Age, to whom God has "put in subjection the world to come" of which we speak, the world of righteousness and peace, the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading.

Receiving from Christ the Words of God, you will surely know that God sent Him. You will turn "from idols, to serve the Living and True God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead." You will "hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ." Amen.

## XLVI.

### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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*Ep.*—JAMES i. 17. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xvi. 5.

THE context of the epistle for the day contemplates the Church in difficulties: "When ye fall into divers temptations," intimates that the fall may have taken place from lack of wisdom, and urges the seeking of wisdom in order to recovery and deliverance, and then shews how wisdom is obtained by hearing the Word of God. By hearing Him who is wisdom men become wise. The Word of God ministered in the Church is wonderfully commended in the epistle for this day. It is called the instrument or power by which God begets us in His own image; by which He makes us the firstfruits of His creatures. The Word made flesh is "the beginning of the creation of God;" the firstborn from the dead; the centre which is first fixed, that all creatures may then be fixed in their sure and everlasting resting-place under Him. Men who receive the Word of God from Him, the Word made flesh, speaking unto them by men in the flesh, they are, after and next to Him, God's firstborn. The Word of God, which begets men, is also the instrument of their salvation; being engrafted upon them, it saves their souls. Such is the power of the Word of God, which begets and saves, which begins and perfects spiritual life. It also comes down in many forms from "the Father of lights;" not of light, but of "lights," a good gift and a perfect giving; one form of ministry confirming another; each a distinct light from the heavenly Father; all together scattering darkness, shewing where snares are laid, that we may not fall into them, shewing the way of escape when we have fallen. "Seeing,

then, that the Word of God is of so much importance," saith the Apostle, "give good heed unto it. 'Let every man be swift to hear,' and let him put away the things which hinder his receiving what he hears—all 'filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness;' all defilement contracted from the outward world; all wickedness overflowing from the teeming fountain of evil in his own fallen nature." Christ for forty days between His resurrection and ascension was chiefly employed in explaining to His disciples the Word of God, preparatory to His bestowal upon them of the Holy Ghost. So the Church, in the portions of Holy Scripture chosen for the epistles immediately preceding the commemoration of the Lord's ascension, urges upon us the subject of the Word of God, its use and its importance. No doubt St. James contended against two opposite parties—first, against those who strove to serve God without first hearing Him; and, secondly, against those who heard Him, indeed, but did nothing in consequence. With the first party he deals in the epistle for this week; the epistle for next week is addressed to the second.

To the first, who are swift to speak and slow to hear, he says, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." These words repress the forward and self-sufficient, who come into the Church to talk down every one, and to learn from none; who are full of plans of operation which God has not given them, and of fleshly zeal for their accomplishment. To them he says, "Cease from endeavouring to fasten your words upon every one whom you meet, and begin to receive with *meekness* the Word of God." Very soon zeal for God refused to wait for guidance from God, and the Church became oppressed by man's works, God's works being excluded. The wrath of man was seen striving to work the righteousness of God, and that proud and barren strife is not yet ended. The gospel for the week shows us how God's righteousness is to be wrought. The triple work of the Holy Ghost is briefly summed up.

1st. He negatives and overthrows the affectation of righteousness without Christ. The world has been wicked in spite of God's command. It will try to be good without His help. The deceiver of the world in the last days of its history wears the mask of a reformer. It is upon a world, to man's eye, improved to the utmost that God's judgments will fall. Men will not call themselves gods without having something to shew for it. They will not worship him who heads their march to perfection, and enables them under his rule to say, Peace and safety, without witnessing results capable of deceiving, if it were possible, the very elect.

The Holy Ghost "shall convince the world of sin," because they believe not on Christ. What the world shall have wrought without Christ, and shall glory in, and fall down before, and proclaim as the work of a present god, He will prove to be sinful, and to merit only condemnation.

2ndly. Having negatived the world's pretension to righteousness, He will yet shew righteousness to be possible, because Christ is gone unto the Father and hath received from Him power to enable men to do the will of God. The world's perfection shall come first, and the Spirit of God will blow upon it and wither it. God's righteousness shall then be seen, wrought by Him who is gone unto the Father, but who dwelleth in His body.

3rdly. He will manifest the victory of the Son of God. He will prove that all things belong to Him who hath redeemed them, and not unto Satan, who hath seduced them from God. Detection of the world's sin when it pretends to goodness, production of God's righteousness in the body of His Son, and manifestation of Christ as the great judge in Israel, the great conqueror of the Prince of this World, is the triple work of the Spirit of Truth, whom Christ should send from the Father. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," but the zeal of the Lord of Hosts would accomplish it.

The Spirit of Truth who glorifies Christ, and who refutes

the world when it would glorify itself, is the spirit into which we have been baptised. Let us yield to Him, that we may be saved from the delusions and false hopes of all those who expect to see good days before Christ's day and without Christ's help. Let us yield to Him, that we may be able to witness that Christ has brought righteousness into our flesh, and brought unto the righteous the Kingdom of God.

The threefold work of the Holy Comforter is set forth in the Gospel, and two marks are given by which He should be known. 1st, "He shall not speak of Himself." This does not mean He shall not speak *about* Himself, but *from* Himself. He will not come before men as an innovator, as an originator of matter never heard of before. He will come speaking of things which He has heard, bringing to the remembrance of the faithful all the good and true things which God has spoken from the beginning of the world. 2ndly, "He shall show you things to come." He will remind you of the past, and lead your thoughts forward to that which the past and the present prepare for. He will show you the Kingdom prepared for Christ. "The future things are mine," said Jesus. "He will shew you them; that is, He will take of the things which belong to me and He will shew them unto you." Oh let us be zealous to travel over the past and the future with such a guide. Let us not compel Him to part company with us, and seek for others who will entertain Him more reverently and more affectionately. We have experienced some of His works. We have known Him by the signs here given unto us. Let us allow His work to proceed. Let us stand in awe in His presence. Let us now come unto Him who was Himself God, and the Temple of God in our nature, that we through Him may be made fit to be for ever God's holy habitation. Amen.

## XLVII.

### FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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*Ep.*—JAMES i. 22. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xvi. 23.

ZEAL for God, to be effective of good, must receive instructions from God. There were men in the Church in St. James's time who were full of plans, and of zeal to carry them into effect; but they waited not for God's counsel; they were swift to speak their own mind, slow to hear His. To such the Apostle said, "Your enthusiasm and excitement are of no avail, they will never work the righteousness of God. God Himself alone knows what He would have done upon the earth. He knows how and when it should be done. You must wait upon Him, and be swift to hear Him. He will save you from doing the works of the flesh, from wasting your strength in doing the work of the hinderer and the destroyer. He would save you from manifold temptations. He is present with you, and would make His presence known by speaking to you, by addressing unto you the word of wisdom, of knowledge, and of safe guidance. Wait for His counsel; let it be engrafted upon you, let it save you." St. James contemplates the Church as in the midst of trials. His message to the tried one is, "Do not despair; yea, on the contrary, rejoice, for God will come to you in the trial; the trial is not from Him, the deliverance is. He appointed no temptations and sorrows for His Church. What He gave would have kept us from all temptation and sorrow. He gave good and perfect gifts to make us good and perfect. We did not use wisely what He gave, therefore are we in trouble. We did not hear His voice, therefore wisdom failed us. But let us now ask wisdom. He will not upbraid us for our lack of it,

but He will give liberally. His "good and perfect gift," which would have kept us from falling into trouble had we given good heed, will deliver us from trouble if we honestly and earnestly seek deliverance, if we come before God "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Heady and wilful children, let past trials suffice. Hear now at length what God the Lord will speak. Hear Him expounding to you His matter in hand; having heard Him, go forth to work not your own work, but His; to abound in the work of the Lord, and to be strengthened continually in the assurance that your labour will not be in vain. The Lord has a work in hand, it must prosper; you have a part in it, you shall not labour in vain.

To some the Apostle said, "Hear first, then work," but to others he said, "Hear and work." For some delighted in hearing; they were charmed listeners, they found great entertainment of their mind in all the ministrations of God's Word; they loved the dogmatical, the speculative, the abstract, they shrank from the practical. To them it was said, "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." The words of God are spirit and life. Appropriate the spirit and the life. Have not the true doctrine only concerning God's operations, but be the subjects of His operations. Not only have the true doctrine concerning the cross, but be yourselves crucified. Not only have the true doctrine concerning the resurrection, but be yourselves risen, risen with Christ, and seeking the things which He giveth, from the place to which He ascended after His resurrection. Have not only the true doctrine concerning Christ, "the Baptiser with the Holy Ghost," but be ye also baptised with the Spirit. Labour to be what baptism supposeth you to have been made. Come before the altar to make eucharist indeed, to bless God for the death of His Son, to receive at God's hand all the blessings which that death hath gained for us. Have not only the true doctrine concerning baptism and chrism, but seek to have the regene-



ration and the heavenly gifts which are poured out upon the regenerate. Be the children of God, and, because children, kings and priests.

Look at yourselves in the Word of God as in a mirror, that you may know what God meant you to be. Let the mirror give its report. Do not hastily and cursorily use it, but most carefully and patiently. That which is called a mirror is also a law that must be obeyed, the perfect law of liberty. The mirror used aright shews us our spiritual condition, discovers to us the things in us which render us fit or unfit for the Kingdom of Heaven. The Word received as a law works in us perfection, and brings to us liberty. The ministry of the Word is not a setting forth of opinions which may be criticised, but of a law which is to be obeyed, the obedience to which is perfect freedom.

The gospel sets forth the power with God which belongs to the doers of His Word. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you." "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." The prayer for holiness brings down from God His Holy Spirit to produce it in the hearts and lives of His children. The prayer of the holy and obedient children brings in the dispensation of the fullness of joy. Blessed are the people whom the Lord has taught to pray, upon whom He has laid the burden of praying in hope, "Thy Kingdom come."

This honour He hath put upon you. By many trials He hath trained you for this. Now when the world is entered upon its time of trouble, He giveth you houses of worship and a season of rest. He sheweth you what He is bringing to pass. He stirreth up your heart to desire it, and to ask for it at His hands, and He giveth you many assurances that your prayer is accepted, and maketh you joyful in His house of prayer. Accept with thankfulness your mission and work.

Let the Lord make you righteous, and draw forth from you "the effectual fervent prayer" of the righteous, which "availeth much."

The prayer of the disciples who received the words of their Lord, to whom for forty days after His resurrection from the dead, before His ascension into Heaven, He taught the meaning of the Scriptures, expounding unto them from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, the things concerning Himself, their prayer brought down on the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Father. The prayer of the Church which hath received the Holy Ghost, and when the gift was well nigh quenched by ages of neglect and unbelief, hath endeavoured to rekindle the heavenly light, their prayer shall bring down from His throne in Heaven the Lord of glory, shall raise from the earth to meet Him the children of the resurrection. Then shall be seen the fulness of joy, the joy of the Head of the Church, completed by the joy of His body, perfected in His likeness; the joy of every righteous soul, completed by the addition to it of a sinless and deathless body; the joy of redeemed men, completed by the redemption of their inheritance; the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for those who are kept for it by the power and unchangeableness of the Lord God Almighty. "Ask and ye shall receive." Many prayers have been made and answers received. Are we not come unto the time of the last prayer and the last answer? If ever men ought "to pray and not to faint," it is when the last and the highest prize is to be won, and the day of its bestowal is at hand. May the Lord who hath heard the cry of His Spirit and the voice of His Church invoking His deliverance and glorious presence, give the speedy answer to their call which He hath promised of old, causing the Heavens and the earth to rejoice together, the Kingdom of God to shine forth, and the whole creation to

experience the deliverance for which it has long groaned and travailed, even its participation in the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

## XLVIII.

### SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

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*Ep.*—I PET. iv. 7. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xiv. 26.

OUR flesh, as we have it, inherited from our first parents, could receive no more honourable place from God than the cross of shame, and torture, and death. The Son of God did hang upon the cross with it, clothed in it. But the same human nature, as He hath it, after suffering and death, has received from God the highest place in the universe, nearest to Himself. The Lord shared with us our place of ignominy and death. He gives unto our nature, which nailed Him to the cross, to share with Him the place of glory, which He had with God before the world was. Where the Word had been from eternity, the Word Incarnate was after His ascension from the earth. Created manhood was placed in Eden; fallen manhood was suspended upon the accursed tree; redeemed manhood is seated in Heaven, at the right hand of God. The angels of Heaven, who saw Jesus the helpless babe; who ministered to Him in the wilderness after His temptation; who witnessed His agony in the garden, and strengthened Him in the trial; who waited round His cross, and guarded His sepulchre; who welcomed Him returning from the earth, leading captivity captive, conqueror of death and of hell, beheld Him as on this day consecrated to His high priesthood at God's right hand; made "Lord and Christ;" "crowned with glory and honour," angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him. Before God comes down to dwell in man He hath first taken up manhood to dwell with Him. When He has

our nature with Himself upon His own throne in Heaven, then He sends down His Spirit to be with us upon the earth. We are first exalted to the highest place, and then made partakers of the highest gift. We have days in the year commemorating the nativity, the death, the resurrection, and ascension of the Lord ; but there is no distinct commemoration of His session at the right hand of God ; no day set apart to keep up the memory of it, the most glorious fact, the consummative event, so to speak, in His history whom men slew with wicked hands, but whom God highly exalted. For it was as upon this day that God did highly exalt Him, and give Him "a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

As on this day He said, "Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." The wonderful transaction of this day enabled the Apostle to affirm, "Of the things which we have spoken this is the sum ; we have such an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens." The apostles were witnesses of Christ's resurrection, they witnessed also His ascension. The first martyr saw Him at the right hand of God. For his testimony to this fact he was stoned as a blasphemer. The testimony of the first martyr will be that of the last witnesses. They also shall see Jesus *standing* at the right hand of God, rising from His seat of rest, disturbed by the death of His saints, and ready to come forth to take vengeance upon their enemies. The session of the Lamb that had been slain, on the right hand of God, was indeed the carrying of the blood of atonement by the High Priest into the holiest place of all. Then the High Priest's intercession began for us. Then the Holy Ghost was sent down from Heaven to write God's law in our hearts, and to put it into

our minds ; the better covenant, which is established upon better promises, began to be administered by Him who is "consecrated for evermore."

The Holy Scriptures read in the Communion Service of this day record the double service of Christ, which should be maintained upon the earth during His absence in the Heavens, and the fruits of that service in His Church. The Holy Ghost would minister for Him, and men bearing commission from Him would serve Him also, and the result would be that every member of the Church would become a steward of the grace of God ; and all should help one another and labour together out of ability supplied to each by God. If the Head of the Church be in the highest place in Heaven, His body on the earth should occupy a place and be engaged in work correspondent with that elevation. Therefore it is said unto them, "The end of all things is at hand ;" "old things are passed away ;" they were crucified and put to death ; "all things are become new," raised from the dead and advanced to God's right hand in the Heavens. Therefore be ye all that it becomes those to be who know such things. In yourselves be sober in body and mind ; be masters of yourselves. Towards God be prayerful ; worship Him ; wait on Him for the fulfilment of His promises. Since the old creation has passed, and is passing away, pray unto God to bring in the new creation, which shall abide for ever. Be sober, and "watch unto prayer." Obtain the mastery over yourselves by the ability which God supplies, that being your own masters you may become God's servants, and that you may prove yourselves to be His servants by maintaining His ceaseless worship, by prayers of every kind for the establishment of His Kingdom. And being wise for yourselves and worshipful towards God, be loving towards men, even with that love which covers sin, which hinders as far as in you lies the manifestation and finishing of that abominable thing. Quench sin, but make virtue to shine forth ; virtue of every kind ; virtue answerable to every grace that is in God, that

good being seen in His Church He may be glorified, and that the glory and strength may be seen to be from Him, through Jesus Christ the Lord.

“The end of all things is at hand” literally has drawn nigh. The beginning of the end is come; it hath been seen. The old creation came to an end upon the cross of Christ; the new creation was manifested in Heaven when Christ ascended to the right hand of God. What was manifested in Heaven shall in due time be seen upon the earth. Because we believe these things, let us be sober and let us “watch unto prayer.” And that prayer may not cease, let love abound. If we love our brethren we shall pray for them, that their sins may be all blotted out and abolished, and that the Kingdom of God, from which sin is for ever excluded, may soon appear, for the satisfaction of the desires, for the consummation of the hopes, of all saints.

As fire burns the incense, so love kindles prayer. And if we love the brethren, let us not only pray for them, but let us cheer them and comfort them in their weary way while they are pilgrims and strangers, travelling through the wilderness which lies between their house of bondage and their home of joy.

“The end of all things is at hand,” the end of the all things that can end. There is that new creation which shall never end, which cannot end, for the seed of death, which is sin, shall never poison it—the “inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” Ye have the earnest of that inheritance even now in the possession of that Holy Spirit of Promise, wherewith ye have been “sealed unto the day of redemption.” Let the earnest which ye have received be seen. As every man hath received the gift, so minister to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Retain God’s Spirit amongst you, and exercise the gifts which He bestoweth, remembering that they are God’s gifts, entrusted to you for the good of all. Give God the glory.

Let us say, "Deo dante dedi:" what God has supplied we dispense for His ends, which are our hope.

Oh for the wise speaking of those who are enabled to speak as the oracles of God ; for the vigorous acting of those who have to minister out of the ability which God giveth ; who have to manifest through their faith, which overcometh, that glory and strength belong to Him whose members they are, of whose anointing they are partakers ! On this day, when our thoughts are directed to Christ sitting at God's right hand, let the spirits of the just who rest in Him whom the angels have carried to His bosom come up before our remembrance. Stephen saw Him in His place of highest glory, and commended his spirit unto Him. Since the day of His first martyr, how many souls hath He received to hold in safety till He shall come to fulfil for them all that yet remains of the promise of His love ! Let us hasten His coming, and their consummation in bliss by resurrection from the dead. Let us be ready to receive Him, and all the blessed ones whom He bringeth with Him, that we may be perfected with them, and, along with them, be received into His Kingdom for ever. Amen.



## XLIX.

### SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

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*Ep.*—I PETER iv. 7. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xv. 26.

GOD does not call us to fast until we have first feasted. Jesus Christ was first filled with the Spirit, then His fast began. So the Church is filled first with the blessing of God, which satisfies, and then, as comparatively easy work, is called to abstain from that which satisfieth not. He saith, "Be sober," to those to whom He had first said, "Drink, yea drink abundantly," and of wine too, the wine of God's Kingdom. He does not call us off from the enjoyments which this world can give, that we may die of inanition; rather He fills us first with His own holy joy, that there may not be room for the other. To lose the flesh without an equivalent, to lose the world without an equivalent, would be hard indeed; but to receive gold first, and then be called off from counters and gravel stones, is not grievous. The gospel for this day treats of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the epistle of the services for God and man which the possession of that gift makes possible. Sobriety is the first effect of the Spirit's presence and operation. The long fast followed immediately the endowment with the Holy Ghost. Christ's long fast, whatever else it means, typifies the long abstinence from the world as it now is which should characterise the Church, from the day of Pentecost till the day of the second advent of the Lord. Watchfulness is the next duty prescribed in the epistle for the week. The sober can keep awake; those who have eaten and drunk too much have heavy eyelids, sleep overcomes them; heavy suppers over night and early rising in the morn-

ing are incompatible; the vigil follows the fast. But the flesh cannot keep awake for the service of God, and every kind of fasting does not produce vigilance. There is a fasting which leads to drowsiness. The flesh slept on Tabor and in Gethsemane; neither the glory nor the agony of the Lord could keep it awake, even in those who loved Him. Fasting and vigil-keeping are only of use as helps to prayer. The chief advantage of having our faculties clear and free is that we may use them in the worship of God. Keep yourselves from drink, He says, not merely that you may work, that your brain may be more vigorous for thought, that you may be able to study and to reflect, but that you may pray. That being sober, you may see the true state of affairs, and may be able to frame your prayer accordingly; to give a true report to God, who has set you to watch; and to prefer to Him the very petitions which the necessity of the hour dictates. But by fasting, and watching, and praying, men must beware of becoming austere and cruel; therefore it is added, "have fervent charity among yourselves." Do not expose harshly the sins which the clearer light in which you are dwelling enables you to detect; but cover them, not with a covering which shall cloak them, but with a covering which shall extinguish them. Love is the fire which must feed the light of Divine worship, and burn its incense; people who fail in love towards each other will soon become unable to worship together; they may labour together at some things, they may fight together a common foe, but pray together they cannot; and they will soon give up the work as impossible. But to win the love of men, even of the holy, must not be the motive of our conduct. Whatever we do or say in behalf of our brethren must tend to confirm them in two things; first, that whatsoever good is done comes from God; secondly, that the power of directing the administration of it and the glory to be reaped from the accomplishment of it belong to Christ.

Be hospitable, as one dispensing not your own stores, but

God's. What you dispense for the good of others, let them see that you received it as a gift yourself; let them so know the stream as to know the fountain from which it has flowed. Minister to one another, "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." If any man be wise, let him strive to make men know that the wisdom began not with him, nor with any man, but came from God; if any man help, let him lead the holpen to thank God for the ability whence the help was derived, that God may be glorified in all things, and that the praise and dominion (the glory and strength) may be seen to belong to Jesus Christ for ever and ever. How shall it be evident that our works are wrought in God, to His glory, and for the establishment of His Kingdom, which He hath put into the hands of His Son? If our works are really wrought in God, the glory must accrue to Him. And how shall all our works be wrought in Him? Only by our being filled with His Spirit, even the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, by whom God is revealed and Christ is glorified. Let us not strive to weary God and disappoint men with carnal imitations of spiritual action, but let us be in the Spirit, that we may serve aright. There is always danger of receding from the spiritual condition. The gospel tells us how the spiritual would be treated. "They shall cast you out of the synagogues, yea the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor Me." None will rejoice in the Spirit but they who know the Father, who have in them the life of God, who know Jesus, who accept Him as the Uniter of God and man, as the Ruler, and Teacher, and Saviour of all. Those who are in God and under Christ are made glad by the presence of the mighty Maintainer of the cause of God; all the rest (unhappily the most in number) must labour to resist Him, who builds the Temple of the God whom they hate, and witnesses to the worthiness of the Saviour whom they reject. Let us not, to win the world's

toleration or to escape its rage, be willing to be without the essential glory of the dispensation under which we live. Let us not desire an inglorious rest. The Head of the Church did not rest till He ascended to the right hand of God. God has prepared no lower resting-place for us; we shall not rest until we find rest on the throne of Christ. Amen.

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## W H I T   S U N D A Y .

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*Ep.*—EPH. iv.   *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xiv.

THE humiliation of Christ, His exaltation, and the end for which He was exalted are set forth in the epistle for this day.

In His humiliation He descended into the lower parts of the earth; in His exaltation He ascended up far above all heavens. He descended lower than all that He might place Himself under the burden of all, that He might suffer for all, and expiate the sin of all. He descended that He might wash out with His blood all the stains which, through means of sin, the first creation had contracted. He ascended that He might create the new heavens and the new earth, which sin would never be permitted to defile, but in which righteousness should dwell for ever. When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. He ascended far above all heavens. His place was higher than them all. The heaven of heavens could not contain Him; the highest heavens could not arrest His upward flight. Where God was, there was His place. He had descended from God when He went forth to seek and to lay hold of the lost creation. He ascended to God when He returned, bearing in triumph, united to Him, the creation which He had redeemed. He ascended far above the highest heavens, bearing with Him that which He had made new, lifting the regenerated to an infinite height above the created. That which He had regenerated He seated with Himself, one with Him, on the right hand of God. The new creature is exalted above the old, is presented before

God, receives from Him approval and honour, takes its place as the building of God eternal in the heavens. He who was crucified upon the earth appears in Heaven as the Lamb that had been slain, and shares the Throne of God. From the right hand of the Majesty on High He creates all things new ; He builds up the new heavens and the new earth ; He fills all things. He in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily brought in redeemed manhood an help unto Almighty God, and enabled man to find his sufficiency in God. He filled God's hands, so to speak, with a new offering, with that creature who should be His image, who should make Him intelligible unto all His works, who should call upon all His works in all places of His dominion to praise His name for ever. He filled man with the glory of God. He made him the tabernacle, the house of God in which He should for ever dwell. Then, after furnishing God with His help, and man with his sufficiency in God, He proceeded to fill all things. Lifted up far above all heavens, He poured down upon them all that which should constitute them the new heavens, which should make them more stable in God, more replenished with His glory, more adorned with His beauty than ever they had been before. When Christ was perfected, and as the Perfected One received His throne at the Father's right hand, then did He send forth the power by which all things should be perfected. He sent forth the Spirit, who should "be everywhere present," that no place might be desolate, that no place might be as a vacated dwelling, occupied by no inhabitants, or by those who should debase and defile it. He sent Him forth that every place where God should be known and served might be filled with a gracious presence. He sent Him forth to be everywhere present where God and man, men and angels, and all the creatures in allegiance unto God could meet, that God might be made known to His worshippers, and that their service and worship and praise might be worthily presented unto Him ; to be everywhere present where God's name was set, where work

was to be done to His honour, where blessing was to be given in His name. He sent forth the Spirit, "who should fill all things," that nothing might be empty and weak and insufficient, that every form might have its substance, every shadow its body, every name its power. He sent forth the Spirit, "the treasure of good," who should bring to every place and person and thing that which should be good for it, which should make it good according to its kind, and a minister of good to everything acted upon by it; the "treasure of good," an exhaustless treasure of unsearchable riches; "the giver of life," life without which no good can be enjoyed; life which appropriates only what is good, and eschews and rejects what is evil; life which labours that glory may be given to God, that peace may be diffused through all the works of His hands.

## LI.

### WHIT SUNDAY.

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*Ep.*—EPH. iv. 4. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN xiv. 15.

THE gospel treats of the promise of the Holy Spirit; the epistle of the manner in which the promise was fulfilled.

Christ promised to send the Holy Ghost to those who would love Him and keep His commandments. By the Holy Ghost they would know all truth; their union with Christ, and the union of Christ with God. The world does not know that Christ is, and is in the highest place; and therefore is indifferent towards Him, as towards a nonentity or towards a real person in a place of no influence. Those who receive the Spirit see Christ; they know that He lives and that they live by Him. The only satisfying evidence of Christianity is the possession of the Spirit of Christ. By what He gives He proves His mission from God. They who receive from Him the gift need not that any man should go about to prove to them that He is, and is in Heaven at God's right hand; they know it already; they have the witness in themselves. They who receive not the Spirit are ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." The Lord gives peace to His Church by putting His Holy Spirit within her. Such peace He had Himself in the midst of a world in arms against Him, while He endured the contradiction of sinners and the rage of God's enemies. If there be a storm without a man, he feels it little while he enjoys peace within. I give peace, said Christ, not as the world giveth. The world may hush itself into a deep calm all around you, but cannot hinder the furious tempest from storming within



your soul. It may be in repose around you as Eden, but it cannot hinder you from being as restless all the while as was Satan in Paradise, when he came to make our first parents partakers of his guilt and wretchedness. Christ giveth to His Church the peace which belongeth to the house of God; yea, the peace of God Himself which passeth understanding. This is the first effect of the indwelling of the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Comforter.

The epistle shews us the manner of the descent of the Holy Ghost. He came down from one man, but not unto one man. There were many together. He fell upon a society, because He would indicate, by His manner of entering the world, that it was to a body He was coming. He did not fall upon a solitary pope, enthroned on high as the singular and special vicegerent of the Son of God upon the earth, but upon many members, making together one body, the beginning of the mighty body of Christ. So when the Holy Ghost first came to the Gentiles, as Peter spake in Cornelius' house, He fell upon a company, not upon an individual. Afterwards, in the diffusion of the grace from the first centre of its activity, He followed the laying on of the hands of men sent by Christ to teach and bless others in His name, because He would shew that while He came to a multitude together, not to separate individuals, yet He came to a multitude in unity, joined together under one Head, and rejoicing to hold every gift, beginning with the highest, in subordination to Him who obtained all things for them, who renounced all things Himself that He might gain all things for others; who, because He descended, was worthy to ascend; to whom God gave the highest place, and to whom the Church of God, following God's example, should likewise, with joy and cheerfulness, award the highest place as well. Christ promised one gift; the promise was fulfilled in a manner which made the one gift to seem to be many. He gave gifts unto men. He came unto many at once, and by many does He operate for ever. Christ sent down the Holy

Ghost to raise up the Church of God, and the many workmen who should be employed as the builders of it. He gave especially four kinds of holy ministry. The Prophet of old invoked a breath from the four winds to come and breathe upon the slain in the valley of dry bones, that the dead might live and become an army for God. So the Holy Ghost, in answer to the prayer which had ascended from God's prophets, came down upon human society as "a breath from the four winds." He came to raise up, in behoof of God's Church, apostles and prophets, evangelists and pastors, that by their joint operation the saints might be perfected; that is, that every holy one might find his right place and perform his due service "for the work of the ministry," literally unto work of ministry, that the work might be done for which ministry was created and endowed. And what was this work? The edifying of the body of Christ, the building up of a body for God's Son, a temple and house for the living God Himself. And what is the meaning, as far as every man is concerned, of this building of the body of Christ? It is the bringing of every member unto the faith and knowledge and perfection of his Head; "Till we all come *unto* [not in] the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God," unto the faith in God which a Son of God should have, unto the knowledge of our Heavenly Father, which becomes every member of His family from the highest to the lowest. This faith in God and knowledge of Him shall not destroy the creature by absorbing it into the Creator. They shall be seen in the perfect man, in man complete in all his parts, in the whole man redeemed, and in the whole man matured, advanced to that stature and strength which shall make him the fulness of Christ. The Spirit, working by many instruments, brings us to this result, and saves us from all who would hinder it. Many hinder, and hinder with a skill and power which only the Holy Ghost, working through all the ordinances of the Church, can defeat. He is the frustrator of that deceitful game by which the pervertors of

God's Word exaggerate and distort some portions of the Divine testimony, hiding and destroying all the rest. He is the faithful witness concerning Jesus Christ who will suffer no part of His work to be obscured or forgotten. The Spirit causeth us to grow up into Christ in *all* things. Where the Spirit is not, the *all things* are changed into *some things*. Where the Spirit is, there is room made for every joint, that it may supply its share of strength for the fitly joining together and compacting of the whole body. The energy of Christ is everywhere throughout His living body. Selfish men would detain Him for ever in their own house; they would monopolise His working. But Christ is more than an apostle or prophet. All ministries are but the channels of His grace; the Church is the vessel which contains it all, and returns to Him His full image. Living water tarries not in the river-beds through which it flows, but hastens to the place into which all its waves must be discharged; so the grace of Christ makes no reservoirs of the fourfold ministry where the streams of life may stagnate, but flows through them into the universal Church, which alone God has made capable of containing the mighty treasure. Amen.

## LII.

### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—REV. iv.    *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN iii. 1—18.

THE gospel for the day presents God unto us as a giver ; the epistle, as a receiver, a giver of life and salvation, a receiver of service and worship. The preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven, and the employment in it of those prepared, are both before us. What is the preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven? A new birth of water and of spirit. The first who was prepared for the Kingdom was He who is called the first-begotten from the dead, the first-born among many brethren. He came by water. He manifested in flesh, the purity of which water is the emblem. The true water is the Divine life, the eternal life, and John saith, “ The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. He who was born of water, who manifested in the flesh the purity of the Divine life, the very righteousness of God, He was in due time born of spirit also, He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. The Spirit, as a dove, descended upon Him, found in Him, the righteous One, His eternal habitation. He, who appeared first as the pure One, emerging, as it were, from the fountain, issuing from the womb of immaculate purity, the image of the Holy God from whom He proceeded, was seen afterward as the mighty One, filled with the Holy Ghost and with power, endowed with the strength of the Almighty. He who rose from the dead the perfect expression of the life of God, triumphing over death and the grave, ascended to the right hand of God and was filled with glory : the true taber-

nacle, the true temple, which being perfected was filled with the glory of God. Jesus became the building that can never be destroyed by resurrection from the dead, and into that building the glory of God entered. It was first shewn in God's presence before all the hosts of Heaven, and then was it glorified for ever. We must be born of water and of Spirit. We are called first to be partakers of Christ's image, and then to be partakers of His glory. All who are baptised into Him, and who desire to receive from Him what their baptism signifieth, shall attain unto this double blessedness. He meets those who receive Him at the threshold of His Church, having gifts in His hand, even regeneration and the Kingdom of God. Those with whom He enters into covenant at the sacred font He takes for his witnesses, and He expects of them that they shall say and shew to the universe that He is the bestower of regeneration and of the Kingdom, the beginning of regeneration now ; the earnest of the Kingdom now ; the perfection of regeneration at the resurrection of the just ; the Kingdom in its fulness after the completion of the work of regeneration. The rest, and joy, and peace, and holiness, which He gives to the human spirit now, shall be extended to man's whole being after the resurrection. The manifold gifts of the Spirit which He pours out upon His Church now are the glass in which is seen, darkly, the glory surpassing all present comprehension of the Kingdom to be brought unto us at His coming and glorious appearing. To live in this world as those who are born into another, and to manifest to the glory of God the earnest of that Kingdom, into the inheritance of which they are born, is the double calling of the Church. This is the life and the anointing of Christ which appeared in Himself when He lived and served God upon the earth : this life and anointing flow from Him into His body to be the Divine marks of the baptised unto the end of the dispensation. He has borne this witness Himself, concerning His Kingdom, and the preparation for it and the foreshewing of it. Others, in the beginning of His Church, have joined their testimony

to His, and in every age of the Church there have been one and another who have understood the mystery of their calling. But, in general, the word which the Lord spake to Nicodemus has a true application to the multitude who have heard Christ's Gospel ever since : " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen ; and ye receive not our witness." God has revived the true witness in our time, and to those who have believed it and have called upon His name He has given to see, in some measure, His works of old, even the days of the right hand of the Most High. The portion of Holy Scripture appointed for the epistle shews us how this grace may be retained in the midst of us, even by letting it be fruitful of service and worship. Service is rendered unto God in a fourfold way. Four living creatures say, " Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which *was*, and *is*, and *is to come*." Four living creatures give *glory*, and *honour*, and *thanks*, to Him that sitteth upon the throne, who liveth for ever and ever. This is the full service of complete spiritual ministry inculcating the fear of God, commending and enforcing His claims upon the reverence of His creatures. The Spirit, alone, who searcheth the deep things of God, can shew how worthy is God to be accounted holy. He sheweth the meaning of the past, the present, and future actings of the Lord, and their connection one with another. The Spirit alone beareth the true witness concerning God, and He beareth it in a fourfold manner, through human ministries which are as diverse from each other as the creatures chosen to be the emblems of them. Let the Church which is one with Him, to whom belongeth the fulness of the Spirit, labour to present before God continually this fourfold instrumentality, that He may make it the subject of His Divine agency ; that He may operate by it the whole result which is set forth under this triple ascription of holiness, under this threefold offering of glory, and honour, and thanks. This service being rendered by the fourfold spiritual ministry, all who are endowed with spiritual authority shall stand in awe of God. All who

occupy places of high trust will feel their responsibility to Him. They will not rule for themselves, neither will they cast their crowns down at the feet of those over whom they rule, by the grace of God; but they will rule for God, and will cast their crowns before His throne, accounting Him worthy to receive *glory*, and *honour*, and *power*. They will first cast their own crowns before God's throne, and then acknowledge His right to the service of all His creatures, and will labour to bring all things, small and great, into conformity with the end of their creation, with the law of their being. Spiritual ministry comes first, magnifying, setting forth, illustrating the holiness of God, of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; ascribing to Him glory and honour, and giving Him *thanks* for what He has been, what He is, and what He is to be; then rank, and place, and office, and everything that is fixed and stable, render to God their true homage, ascribe to Him also glory and honour, and acknowledge that *power* belongeth alone unto Him. Amen.

### LIII.

#### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—REV. iv. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN iii. 1—18.

THE portion of Holy Scripture appointed for the epistle carries our minds forward to the time when power shall be worthily employed in worshipping and serving God, and authority shall hold its seat under Him and cast its crown before His throne. Power set forth under its fourfold symbol shall never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" and authority, represented by the twenty-four crowned ones whose seats are around the throne of the Almighty, shall say, "Worthy art Thou, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they *are*, for Thy pleasure they were *created*." Hitherto power has refused to be holiness unto God; it has not worshipped Him in gratitude for the past, understood Him and co-operated with Him for the present, trusted in Him and looked for His glorious future. It has not said, Thou *wast* a God doing wonders; Thou *art* a God still working mightily; Thou *wilt be* the Lord God Almighty, bringing in a future worthy of Thy past and Thy present workings. Power has glorified itself, not God. It has recorded its own past, shaped its own present, hoped for its own future, forgetting and forsaking God. Those in the place of rule have not said unto God, Thou art worthy to receive glory, honour, and power; the glory of having made all things, the honour of ruling over them, the power to use them according to Thy good pleasure. They have accepted all things without giving God the glory of having made them, and put them into their hands. They have put the chief honour at the head of all



things upon their own heads, they have taken to themselves the power over them, saying, in the pride of their hearts, They are ours; for us they are, for us they were created. Such has been the time history of power and authority, but such shall not be their history for ever. God's name shall yet be hallowed, His Kingdom shall come, His will shall be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. The gospel for the day shews us what must be done before this result can be seen. "A people which *shall be* created shall praise the Lord." The people which *have been* created have failed to do so; a new people must be brought into existence for the work, either by utter destruction of the first and production again out of nothing of a new world in their stead, or by making the first over again after a new model. The latter is God's device. Jesus Christ came not into the world to condemn it, and make a new world in its place. He came into the world to save *it*; out of the old material to bring forth a new work. The new creation is the old creation remade. The glorified was once the fallen. Not the created only, but the created ruined after its creation; seized after its ruin by Him who created it and built it up again around Himself out of its ruins more glorious than before. The portion of Holy Scripture used for the epistle cuts in two one heavenly vision. It is the first part of the vision only. The second part explains how power was made to serve God, and authority to honour Him, even by the Son of God becoming a "Lamb that had been slain." The four living creatures who shall say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," the crowned elders who cast their crowns before the throne of God, who fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, acknowledge that they attain to this condition, not by creation, but by redemption. They receive the power to worship and the right to reign from Him who redeemed them to God by His blood out of every *kindred and tongue and people and nation*, and made them unto God (become through His death their own God) kings and priests, and prepared them in due time to reign upon the

earth. The glory which belongeth to Christ as the Creator is eclipsed, as it were, by the greater glory which hath accrued to Him as the Redeemer of all things. The innumerable company of angels around the throne of God acknowledge in Him a deeper right to the possession of all things than that which even creation gives Him. God glorified Himself more by giving His Son to redeem than by sending Him forth at first to create. Therefore do the angels say, "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* And all creatures in Heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all things in them, cry out, *Blessing and honour, and glory, and power,* be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." All elements needed for conducting the government of the universe are in the hands of the Lamb that was slain, and from His hands must be received. The sevenfold enumeration sums up all that angels can think of or utter. The fourfold ascription speaks forth the deep satisfaction of universal nature, accepting all its blessedness from the hands which once hung upon the cross, and acknowledging that because derived from Him it shall abide for ever and ever. To Him it ascribes all the glory of its being able to exist before God as His creation, to be for His service and blessing. The last great festival of the Christian year has been celebrated, and now the end of all is set before us, the everlasting worship and service of God by a people attaining unto regeneration, ruling over and administering a new creation, which fell in their fall and recovers with their recovery. In the Catholic Church generally this Lord's-day after Pentecost is set apart for the celebration of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Both in the gospel and in the epistle we are taught concerning the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. At our creation, God said, "Let us make man." In our regeneration, we see three persons and one God effecting our salvation. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that the world by Him might be saved.

The Son so loved us that, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so did He give Himself to be lifted up in death on our behalf. The Spirit of the Father and of the Son so loved us that He came forth from God that we might be created anew in Jesus Christ. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost have come upon us. We have been baptised into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Through Christ we have access by the Spirit unto the Father.

What manner of people ought we to be who have been so strangely honoured? Do we dream; or hath God indeed taken us in hand to make of us a people for His praise? Is Christ in Heaven, and is our nature with Him there? Are we soon to have this body of humiliation changed into the likeness of His glorified body? Are our brethren and fathers only asleep and not dead? Shall we soon hear the voice which called them and us out of sin, calling them from the grave and us from our present weakness? Is the world to come of which we speak a real world and soon to appear? These things being so, let us seek to be affected proportionately to the objects which have to affect us. Let us come now unto Him who, while upon earth in the truth of our humanity, was in Heaven in heart and spirit with God who had sent Him forth from Heaven, that we may eat His flesh, and thereby ascend more and more unto Him from whose fulness we receive, that we may drink His blood, and so be entirely of one Spirit with Him. Let us partake of that flesh which loves God and man, of that blood which can serve them, that we may be disposed to serve and enabled to render the service which is fitting. Unto Him who did the will of God in our flesh, and can alone enable us to walk in His steps God with us be glory for evermore. Amen.

## LIV.

### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

TRINITY SUNDAY ACCORDING TO THE WESTERN  
CHURCH.

ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY ACCORDING TO THE EASTERN  
CHURCH.

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*Ep.*—REV. iv. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN iii. 1—18.

THE last great gift of God to the children of men was on the Day of Pentecost; then, according as it is written, God having raised up his Son Jesus sent Him to bless us; then, after having put all things under His feet, He gave Him to the Church to be head over all things unto us; then God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ came down to make their abode in the Church by the indwelling therein of the Holy Spirit. The portion of Holy Scripture set apart for the epistle of this day presents to us the introduction to the next great act, namely, the coming of the Lord to take possession of His Kingdom, and the gospel treats of the work which the Holy Ghost, who came down to this earth on the Day of Pentecost, has to do before that Kingdom can be manifested. There are five visions of the Lord in the Apocalypse, two of Him as the Son of Man, two of Him as the Lamb, and one relating to Him as the Word of God. The first vision of Him as the Son of Man is in the 1st chapter, where He appears as fulfilling the promise made to His disciples, "Lo I am with you always," for He is in the midst of the Churches, walking amongst them and holding their ministers in His right hand. As in the first vision the Lord is seen on earth amongst His people, in the second He is seen in Heaven as the Lamb slain with the seven horns and the seven

eyes, the Lamb who is also a Lion, and who “came and took the sealed book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the Throne.” This second vision of Him is not of Him as upon the earth with His Church, but in Heaven with His Father, receiving with His Heavenly Father the worship of all the heavenly hosts, in the midst of the Church, and of the myriads and chiliads of Angels, and at the head of all creatures, presenting Himself unto God for the sealed titled-deeds of His inheritance, which none might claim but He Himself. The third vision of Him is as of the Lamb standing upon Mount Zion with 144,000 sealed ones, who have God’s name written in their foreheads, who alone understand the new song which is sung in Heaven, who have escaped the sins and plagues of Babylon, and are saved from the power of the beast which cometh up out of the bottomless pit. The fourth vision of Him is in that same 14th chapter of the Revelation, as the Son of Man with the golden crown on His head and the sharp sickle in His hand, upon the white cloud, come to reap the harvest of the earth. And the last vision of Him is in the 19th chapter, where He is shewn as the Faithful and True One, whose name is called the Word of God, riding on the white horse, followed by the armies of Heaven unto the destruction of the beast and the false prophet, the kings of the earth and their armies. There is a sequence in these visions : the first presents the Lord as abiding with His Church upon the earth until the end ; the second, as claiming in due time His inheritance for Himself and for His Church ; the third, His first act in immediately bringing in His Kingdom, *vid.*, sealing the chosen remnant ; the fourth, His second step towards full possession of the inheritance, *vid.*, His gathering of the great harvest ; the fifth, His judgment upon the wicked, that He may rid the earth of the oppressor thereof, and all his followers. The second of these visions furnishes the portion for the epistle of the week ; it suits well with the idea of those who make this day to be the day of celebrating the mystery of the Holy Trinity, for

in the vision appear the Lord God Almighty, the Seven Spirits of God, and the Lamb that was slain, who hath the Seven Spirits of God, as God Himself hath, and it suits with the idea of those who make it the festival of All Saints, for it treats of the dignity and occupation of the saints, whether under the symbol of the four living creatures in the midst of the throne and round about it, or as represented in the twenty-four crowned elders whose thrones are set nearest to the Throne of God Himself, as the thrones of princes near the central throne of their Royal Father; then of their dignity and of their occupation as commencing and concluding the worship of Heaven, followed by the innumerable company of angels and by all the creatures of God, and it serves well for those also who make this day but as the first Lord's-day after Pentecost, for it presents the next step after the gift of the Holy Ghost in the development of the purpose of God, not the actual return of the Lord to the earth, but the solemn preparation for that event. The epistle then sets forth the homage done to Christ in Heaven before He comes forth to take His Kingdom, the gospel characterises those who shall see that Kingdom, who shall enter with Him into it. The Kingdom has not yet been seen, for the regeneration has not yet been completely effected; none are wholly regenerated, and some not yet partially. No one has yet seen the Catholic Church. We believe that in God's purpose there is such a society, and that it shall be manifested in its time; we believe that the materials for it have been gathering from the beginning, and that all these materials are in safe keeping in the hands of Him who will put them all together in the day of His glory. In one sense it is true that the visible Church has not yet existed. But whatever is regenerated is regenerated for this end, that it may see and enter into the Kingdom of God; therefore, in every age, the Kingdom of God has been in a mystery, and the members of the Church are the subjects of that Kingdom. In the society of the regenerate Christ rules with the authority of a King. He was the bond-

servant of God before His resurrection, we are the bond-servants of God in Him before our resurrection as well as after it. Our kingdom is not yet come, but God's Kingdom is always; we are prepared to reign by being trained to serve, our regenerated part now being ruled by God's rules, for God rules over the rest of our being. That we may serve God and be prepared to rule for Him, let us draw nigh this day to Him who first did so—the first who was “born of water and of Spirit,” and who will never let us go till He bring us to the same birth of purity and power, and preparation for glory everlasting. Amen.

## LV.

### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—REV. iv. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN iii. 1—18.

THE first portions of Holy Scripture chosen for the Communion Service on the Lord's-day immediately succeeding the commemoration of the day of Pentecost, relate to the regeneration of the Church, and to the worship of Heaven. Now that Christ has died and risen again, what is the next fact concerning death and resurrection which our minds should dwell upon? The death unto the natural, and the resurrection unto the glorified condition of the Church—the body of Christ. The Head of the Church being perfected, waits for the perfecting of His members. Now that the Holy Ghost has been given, the next thing to be thought of is the work which he was given to do. After the descent of the Holy Ghost the next thing is the production of the mystical body of Christ. As the Creed expresses it, “I believe in the Holy Ghost, in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body.” This was the sequence in the mind of those who first learned from God to repeat their creed, and have left the record of their faith to us and to our children. I believe that there is a Holy Ghost, and I believe that a Holy Catholic Church will appear in due time to be the demonstration of that fact. Moreover, I believe that the members of that Holy Catholic Church have joint participation in many blessings, but especially in these two, forgiveness of sins and resurrection of the body. The first and the last blessings, that received at the starting-point in the Christian race, and that which is won at the goal, are



the two enumerated. Whatever stages are to be passed through in a race, the point in the heart of the runner, after he has left the starting-post, is the goal where all his hopes shall be crowned and his toils rewarded. In the Greek Church the first Lord's-day after Pentecost is their All-Saints' day, shewing us how closely the two facts were connected in the minds of believers in the first days of the Christian religion. The Church said in effect, "Now that we have celebrated joyfully the coming into the midst of us of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, let us anticipate by hope the glorious result of His coming, and look for the manifestation of the sons of God." The idea of the Holy Spirit was not interwoven in their minds with selfish, with sectarian or partial objects, but with the salvation, and the entire salvation (from the first sense of forgiven sin to the crowning experience of the risen, glorified condition), of the whole Catholic Church. The gospel for the day treats of two things, of the regeneration and of the Kingdom. The Holy Spirit has come for the double object that we might become regenerate, and that we might see the Kingdom and enter into it. In proportion as we have distinct ideas of what the Holy Ghost has come to do, we shall experience His work in the midst of us. If we will understand regeneration as God defines it we shall know it as His Holy Spirit produces it; if we embrace the letter concerning the Kingdom, we shall receive the earnest and power of it. "The world," said Christ, "cannot receive the Spirit of Truth, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." They will not look at Him that they may know Him, they will not follow on to know Him after their attention has been called to Him; they are contented with vagueness and indistinctness where God demanded of them attentive observation and accurate knowledge. Those on the other hand who "see Him and know Him," who study the gift and seek to know fully the objects for which it was bestowed, shall be enabled to receive it, to hold and to enjoy it. But the warning given to Nicodemus stands good for all men to the end of time,

namely, that the way to know God is to press into what He gives. What God calls us unto is set before our eyes as an historic, visible, palpable object. "What we have seen and heard and handled we declare unto you," said the apostles in the beginning. The end we are to reach we behold in God visible in our flesh, in Jesus who slew in our flesh the power of the enemy, who hath obtained in our flesh resurrection from the dead and possession of all honour and glory at God's right hand. While looking at Him lifted up the Holy Ghost comes to us as health came to the wounded Israelites whilst they looked at the brazen serpent set up in the wilderness. The Holy Spirit findeth us with our thoughts turned towards God in our flesh, who died for our sins and liveth in our risen manhood for ever, and raiseth us through the visible into the invisible, through the Son who came to save us unto the Father from whom He came. In the gospel for the day the work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost in bringing about our regeneration and giving unto us the Kingdom is distinctly set forth. This work is no intellectual discovery, but a spiritual experience. One of the blessed Three is called the Way. Being turned to Him and found in Him as travellers on a way, we are found by the power which sustains us through the journey, and in due time we reach the end. "Through Jesus by the one Spirit we have access unto the Father." As the gospel presents to us the Church attaining to regeneration and to the Kingdom, the portion appointed for the epistle opens to our view the far end of both, the eternal worship of God who created all things and redeemed all by Jesus Christ. In the vision every mode of expression of the Divine life, by whichever of the four symbols it is represented, expends its strength for ever in ascribing holiness to God in triple ascription to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And all who attain to dominion headed up under the crowned elders do follow the ascriptions of praise with acts of homage and lay down all their glory and authority continually at the feet of

Him from whom they have received them ; regeneration preparing for worship, and the Kingdom attained consecrated unto God as an offering for ever. The chief value of regeneration is that it disposes us to worship God, the chief value of the Kingdom is that it enables us to bring Him an offering. Amen.

## LVI.

### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—1 JOHN iv. 7. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xvi. 19.

THE Church has led us through all the doctrines of Divine revelation. The commemoration of last Lord's-day concluded, so to speak, the course of Christian theology. This day the course of practical religion begins. We are taught its first lesson, "Let us love one another, for love is of God." Children become like what they have seen at home in their father's house; we are called upon to manifest what is the law of our Father's house, what is the essence of the life that circulates in the family of God. The epistle of this day calls upon us to love our brethren, and condemns as spurious a certain affected knowledge of God, which is characterised by inhumanity rather than by brotherly love. "If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

St. John insists greatly in this epistle on brotherly love. He is dealing with men who seemed to have very deep knowledge of God and deep communion with Him, but who separated themselves from their brethren, ignorant and regardless of their places and duties in the body of Christ. These men spoke much of their "knowledge of God" and of the "indwelling of God." The Apostle shewed them that when God came into the world He came to manifest love, and that those who learned to love were those who understood God; also he taught them that God dwelt in a body composed of members caring for one another, loving one another. "If we love one another God dwelleth in us." The love of the members of the Church towards one another mainly causes the Church to be the place where God can dwell. "God is

love," and dwells in those who love. No man can dwell at peace amongst those who hate his friends and those who are most nearly and tenderly related to him; God cannot dwell among those who love not those whom He loves, His children, whom He has made members of Christ, to whom He has given the Holy Ghost. The children of God should love with God's love. What has God's love done? According to the text before us, two things. He has sent His Son for a double object: to take away sins, the characteristic of our first condition, in which He found us, and give unto us instead of them an everlasting life of sinlessness, in which should be expressed the very character of God Himself.

In the order of the text the double object is thus expressed: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us; because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might *live* through Him." Before we can live through Him He must die for us; therefore it is added, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the *propitiation* for our sins." He came to bring us God's blessing, which is life for evermore; but before He can pour into us the blessing He must take away from us the curse, "being made a curse for us." Christ the propitiatory offering for the sins of our first life, Christ the bestower of the new life which cannot sin, is the full expression of the love of God, who hath taken away from us the greatest misery, and hath bestowed upon us the greatest happiness.

If God's love sent His Son for these two objects, our love should also labour for this double end, that all might know that their sins are taken away by the death of Christ, and that being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, they are saved by His life, if, indeed, they trust in Him, thanking Him for what He took away when He was upon the earth and upon the cross, receiving from Him what He ascended into Heaven and sat at the right hand of God that He might bestow. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Let us lift men to their glorious rest,

their safe and abiding dwelling-place, which is God Himself; let us labour that the Church may be not the cage of unclean spirits, but the holy habitation of God. Let us labour for the building of the King's palace, that His palace being builded and prepared for Him to dwell in, the whole extent and glory of His Kingdom may appear. Divine love labours for this double end, that men may find their places in Christ, and so dwell in God that God may find in His Church the city of His habitation, His temple, His dwelling-place for ever. Our eyes cannot see God, but our hearts are made to hold Him. The way of philosophy is to keep Him at a distance and to gaze at Him, as men look at the stars above their heads through the telescope, as they explore through the microscope the atoms beneath their feet. God indulges not the curiosity of the intellect, but He satisfies the desires of the heart. He addresses to the heart the record of His love, and enters by the door which faith opens. The Spirit is not seen, but He takes possession of him "who confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God," and thenceforth "God dwelleth in him and he in God."

If we love the brethren, and if the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love, dwell in us, then do we look for the day of judgment without fear; that day will be the day of deliverance to those whom we love. The Deliverer Himself is the firstborn amongst them. They who hate His body will fear in that day; they who love it shall rejoice. In proportion to the strength of their love will be their freedom from fear. "Perfect love casteth out fear." "He that feareth is not made perfect in love." God has arisen to fill His Church with the Spirit of love, let not His children resist Him. We learn from the gospel of the day that selfishness was the mark of the professors of godliness when Christ lived upon the earth, and the prophecy of Scripture informs us that it will be the mark of the last and worst days of the Christian dispensation. "Men shall be lovers of their own selves," having all the while "a form of godliness."

There are two things distinguishing the rich Pharisee in the parable. He did not receive from God all that he had a right to according to the conditions of the dispensation under which he was placed, and he did not give to his brother the help which it was in his power to <sup>see</sup> administer. He did not receive from God, for he was not appreciating duly the means which God had appointed for his blessing. He was not making the most of Moses and the Prophets; he imagined ways of dealing with men more effectual for good than those ordained by God. He does not know even in the place of torment that he lost his happiness by neglecting to make use of the means of help and blessing which belonged to his day. He forgot or despised the provision made by God for the conversion of men to righteousness. Send one from the dead to my brethren and they will repent, was the cry of his unbelief. They have those by whom God can do that work for them if they will hearken unto them, was the answer of faith. In the event it proved so. They who refused to hear Moses and the Prophets, the precursors of Christ, refused to hear Jesus Himself when He rose from the dead.

Let us highly esteem and fully use what we have. The man in the parable of the gospel neglected "Moses and the Prophets." The epistle tells us whom we have to *confess*, even Jesus the Son of God, whom we have to *receive* and to *hold* unto the end, even the Spirit of God, "for hereby we know that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."

May the words which we read before the altar not be a strange language, but the true interpretation of the hearts of the worshippers of those who read and of those who hear and respond.

So shall we have boldness in the day of judgment, when the Judge comes to distinguish between those who received God's salvation and those who evaded and neglected it. He will make those to expect with full confidence the eternal

glory who had received with all their hearts the salvation which preceded it and prepared for it.

Blessed are they who receive God's grace, who love those that receive it, because they receive it, who help all their brethren according to the ability wherewith God has supplied them, who are themselves established and who strive to establish all others "in the present truth," that they with all may soon enter into the possession of the glorious hope. And now unto the Lord God our Saviour, even unto the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be all glory ascribed by us and by all for evermore. Amen.



## LVII.

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—1 JOHN iii. 13. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xiv. 16.

FOR the two successive Sundays after commemorating the mystery of the Holy Trinity the epistles in the Communion Service treat of one subject. They both testify of the Divine love. The first of them, in these terms: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The second in the following words: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." They both also press upon us to love one another as God loves us all. In the first we read, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another; he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" And in the second it is written, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." The two gospels connected with these epistles show two ways very opposite to each other, but both very real, by which love is tested. In the first, perishing humanity lies at our door, and we are called upon to prove our love by helping to raise it out of its misery; in the second it is pointed out to us that the way to show our love is to enter into the joy of our Lord, to partake of the feast which the Man raised from the dead and ascended into Heaven dispenseth unto the elect of God. One gospel summons Love to the house of mourning to dis-

perse its gloom, the other invites it to the mansion of festivity and gladness, to be filled with its enjoyments, and, by happy and thankful participation, to enhance its joy. The unloving will neither weep with those that mourn nor rejoice with those that make merry. Love slays the selfishness which refuses to give and the pride which disdains to receive. Love is willing to partake of all that the Creator is pleased to bestow, and envies not those by whom He chooses to bestow it; Love rejoices to raise to its highest point of blessedness the fallen creation, and despises not those whom misery has cast down before its feet. To the generation amongst whom Jesus lived both these tests were applied. In both of them, as in the scales of God, a religion of high profession and great esteem amongst men was "weighed and found wanting." The Pharisee neglected his poor brother perishing at his gate, and refused to be holpen by his brother blessing him from the very throne of God. He would not give to his brother a morsel of bread, he would not receive from his brother the Spirit of the living God. The last generation of Christian men are warned not to be like the last generation of Jewish men. By the same tests love is proved for ever. There is a great analogy between the condition of Palestine in the days of Christ and modern Christendom. The story of the rich man and the beggar at his gate (both children of Abraham) shows how extremes met amongst a people whose law enjoined that "he who gathered much should have nothing over, and that he who gathered little should have no lack." How is that which was seen in the city of Jerusalem seen also in all the cities of Christendom, the extreme of wealth, and self-indulgence, and luxury, and refinement, side by side with want and poverty in all their forms of misery, in all their ways of grossness, and filthiness, and self-abasement? Dogs are now licking sores which men will not look at or care for. Infidel men on heathenish principles are striving to alleviate evils which Christian men will not heal by the application of the only remedy, "the virtue" which

comes forth from Him into whom they have been baptised. But now, also, the men who are indifferent to the sufferings of their brethren are contemptuous as the Jews were of the blessings which God by men bestows upon men, which were given once for all and for ever to the Man whom God has exalted to His own right hand, and from Him are dispensed freely and abundantly by those whom He appoints to all who will receive. In our day God has called His Church to a feast; not only to be thankful for a curse rolled away, but to receive a blessing purchased. Jesus Christ took from us what we deserve, He pours out upon us what He merited. He has obtained for us from God the bread which satisfieth; He is Himself that bread. He gives us the Spirit of God that we may know the things which are freely given unto us of God. A feast is furnished for us of which the Master of the feast, the Host, is God Himself. What we are called to partake of is, first, the new humanity which Christ has made capable of being the heir of God; and secondly, the honour, and dignity, and glory, and heavenly pleasure which shall be its everlasting portion. The guests are all who have loved truth and wrought righteousness and given glory to God from the beginning of the world. If the love of what is good be in us, such a feast, and the giver of the feast, and such guests will call it forth; such communion will we desire with "longings which cannot be uttered;" and having experienced how Divine love can bless, we shall go forth to minister blessing. Every member of the Church will contribute what he can to the common store. Those who have freely received will freely give, the double duty of love shall be fulfilled, and praise and thanksgiving will ascend to Him who rejoiceth to give, and who also receiveth graciously at our hands the fruit of what He has given, and our praise for His gifts. Amen.

## LVIII.

### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—I PETER V. 3. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE XV. I.

THE Communion portions of Holy Scripture for the two preceding Lord's-days commended to the communicants the love of their brethren; the epistle for this day enjoins upon us to reverence them. Love, if not guarded by reverence, tends to familiarity; and reverence, not preceded by love, produces fear and a spirit of servitude. We must love our brethren with a pure heart and fervently, but we must never forget that they are members of Christ, that they are made in the image of God, that they are set in the Church to represent in divers ways the Most Holy One, and to do His will. Subordination to one another based upon humility fits us for the reception of grace. God giveth grace to the humble; against the proud He setteth Himself in battle array. The proud are they who refuse to keep rank, to take their right place in the spirit of humility. Those who are in their right place because of their lowly estimation of themselves and their high appreciation of the order of God, are in a fit condition to receive His grace; they know what to do with the heavenly gift when it is bestowed upon them; they are joints and bands by which nourishment is ministered and the whole body is edified. Subordination to one another is subjection to the mighty hand of God; therefore are we exhorted to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due time. Subordination in the Church and in human society generally is not subserviency to a helpless man; it is a putting of one's self into God's hand, His hand of might and strength, for His work, whatever it may be. Now that the Head of

the Church is not personally in the world, but in Heaven, the Church, His body, is God's hand, to do what He would do for the establishment of His Kingdom. Be in your place in the Church, and be at the disposal of God's hand, are terms of similar import. When we are under God's hand we are bidden by Him to be free from care. He who hath laid hold of us will not let us go; He knows wherefore He has taken us into His hands, He cares for those whom He holds in His hands for His service. "Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." Those who are subordinated to God and whom God cares for, the devil hates, he seeks to destroy them. St. Peter, no doubt, spake not only a general truth, but specially referred to a universal trouble then imminent upon the whole Church. "Be sober, be vigilant." Now that God has organised you and set you in battle array against His enemies, observe the holy discipline of His service. Let not the spirit of self-indulgence and unwatchfulness take possession of you. You are about to be tried in every court where the wicked one can appear as your *accuser* to *plead* against you. Let your judges be able to decide nothing against you but that you have pleased God, and have been awake to His service and to the hope of His reward. All the courts of the empire were being opened whilst the Apostle was writing, that the devil might plead in them against the Christians. Your *adversary*, he who conducts the prosecution against you, is the devil; the court is on the side of the prosecution; the accuser is a lion roaring in his own den on his own track where he hunts his prey. Let him find nothing in you but the work of Him against whom all his malice failed. The devil stirred up the whole power of the Roman empire against the Christians in the beginning; he accused them in all the courts, he roared against them from the centre of imperial authority, he walked through the whole empire to find them out and destroy them. Therefore were they called upon to be sober and vigilant, that the enemy might have no true accusation against them. The

more violent the storm the more firmly the ship holds to the moorings in the place of shelter. We must resist the accuser who compels us to plead for our lives by increased steadfastness in our faith. Seek not to please him, saith the Divine warning, by apostasy from the faith. You cannot please him otherwise. Nothing in your peculiar circumstances is the ground of complaint against you. You are hated for the same reason that your brethren everywhere are hated; you cannot escape by changing your place and altering your circumstances; flight is in vain, you will be overtaken wherever you go. Where you are assailed there make your stand; fight the good fight of faith. You are on your trial whether you will give up your faith in Christ to please the devil or through fear of him. If you will hold your faith then after the trial you shall receive a great reward. After ye have suffered awhile ye shall enter into eternal glory. How shall ye overcome? By knowing God as the God of *all* grace, by opening your hearts to all His grace, His perfecting grace, *i.e.*, His grace by which He knits you into the body, assigning to you your place in it; His stablishing grace, His grace by which He confirms you in the place wherein He planted you; His strengthening grace, His grace by which He endues you with the power which belongs to the place where you are established; His settling grace, His grace by which all your foundations are made secure, and because of which you shall never be moved. To Him who gives this grace shall be ascribed the glory of your deliverance, to Him shall belong the rule over you for ever. The enemy shall not boast over you as his prey, he shall not serve himself of you as his slave; but God shall glory over you as His redeemed and regenerated creation, He shall obtain service from you, the fruit of your will and intelligence, the work of love, of wisdom, of knowledge, and of power, which shall never know weariness nor desire change. What we shall do in God's service we know not yet, but the Gospel indicates the present work of the well-ordered and compacted Church even to follow the

example which the Head hath given, to follow the example of His labour in carrying home into the fold of God His lost sheep scattered abroad, the example of His diligence in seeking for the lost treasure and not wearying till it be found, recovering unto God His Church, and finding again for Him the love of His people, the only offering which is acceptable unto Him, without which all services are a weariness unto Him. Amen.

## LIX.

### FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—ROM. viii. 18. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE vi. 36.

THE manifestation of the sons of God will take place when the whole work undertaken in their behalf by the Son of God shall be finished. He will shew unto God His finished work, God will accept and commend it, and the whole creation of God will rejoice in that day. The sons of God are not manifested in the disembodied state. The redemption of their body comes first, the setting free of their body. Then follows the adoption, the setting of them in order by God as His sons, His sons set free, whose freedom shall be accompanied by the liberty of the whole creation. The whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain till its liberty come. The saints who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within themselves, waiting for the same liberty, not for the escape of the soul from the body which oppresses it, but for the setting free of the body itself. Our hope is "a glorious liberty." The service of God will be perfect freedom. We shall be free when there is no sin in our souls, no death in our bodies. The creation will be free when ruled by the free. We and all things which fall and rise with us are longing to be free, and the will of God concerning us and concerning the creation which is bound up with us is that we should enjoy together the highest earnest possible of that which we hope for. He is honoured when our faith expels sin from our souls, and preserves our bodies in health and purity for His service, and when the portion of the creation which is entrusted to our care is not wasted in wickedness, but employed for the glory of God, for



the help of His Church, and for the service and good of all men. He gives us by His Spirit the earnest of our hope; we by the same Spirit of holiness and love do give to the creation the assurance and foretaste of its future blessedness and rest. We hope for liberty, we struggle even now for that which we hope for, for liberty not to sin against God, but for liberty to serve Him. We strive for liberty to think good thoughts, to speak good words, to do good works, to worship God, to learn His ways, to keep His laws, to honour His institutions, to receive His grace, for liberty to be under law to Christ to have our thoughts and desires in captivity unto Him.

The nations of baptised men should be seen "standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." If they would accept His freedom, if they would allow the nature of it and the way of its attainment to be freely declared unto them by His ministers who are put in trust with the mysteries of God, then would every other yoke that is shameful and galling be removed from their neck. Heavenly freedom would beget liberty upon the earth. Godliness would reap its double harvest, the full blessing in its season, and until its day the joyful earnest of it. If the epistle sets before us our "blessed hope," the gospel inculcates the conduct that becomes us till that hope appear. The first word which is addressed to us by the gospel of the day is "Be ye therefore merciful." Ye live in the midst of a groaning creation. Behave not rudely to the travailing woman. Give her rest till her hope be accomplished, till her sorrow be changed into the joy that a man is born into the world. The Church and the creation, though full of hope, are weak and suffering; yea, because they are waiting to bring forth, therefore is their weakness greater, their suffering more acute. Aggravate not, but mitigate the sorrow; cheer it with the word of hope, the note of its coming, its speedy, its entire deliverance. The more clear our light, the more do we need to be merciful; for light shews imperfection and weakness till the full salvation be consummated. Increase of light gives the charitable man

occasion for increasing in mercy, and furnishes to the self-righteous means for abounding in cruel judgments and devouring words. A people (if such could be the case) increasing in spiritual light, in the knowledge of the purpose and ways of God, and of the defects and failings of all men, and not at the same time making corresponding progress in mercifulness and pity, would make the nearest approach of any to the likeness of the hater and of the accuser. The merciful alone are fit to be intrusted with the awful lamp of truth. The second word in the gospel is "forgive," the third is "give." God is merciful; out of His mercy He forgives, and to those whom He has forgiven He gives.

Let mercy and forgiveness and grace abound in the Church of God. The parable in the gospel brings into contrast the opposite character, that we might learn the lesson more perfectly and escape from the evil thing more effectually. Give, and it shall be given unto you. You see a want, if possible supply it. You have it in your power to give; Christ began to give when He had ascended up on high; you are risen with Him, you are seated with Him in the heavenly places; with Him give gifts unto men. He enables all His members to minister grace. Even their words are means of dispensing blessing from God, of making His Spirit to flow and to circulate, much more their deeds and holy example. Blessed are they who begin earliest and continue longest giving that which is good. They will receive the more abundant return. A day will come when God and man will remember what they have wrought; "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall be given into their bosom." How shall the Church give if she will not receive? Let us say, "Blessed be God for His unspeakable gift." "Let us offer unto God thanksgiving." Let us draw nigh unto Him who served and glorified God, who blessed and saved God's creation; let us partake of His fulness that we may follow His example according to our place and measure, waiting for His manifestation that we may be manifested with Him. Amen.

## LX.

### SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—I PET. iii. 8. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE v. 1.

TWICE the Lord gave to certain of His disciples, who were fishermen, a miraculous draught of fishes; first, when Peter was called to the apostleship, and with him Andrew, and James and John (the sons of Zebedee); afterwards when the commission was, as it were, renewed to Peter after the resurrection of Christ. Four disciples appear to have been present at the first miracle, seven at the second.

At the first miracle Peter said, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." At the second he plunged into the sea to meet the Lord, the motion of the vessel being too slow for his ardent affection. The miraculous draught of fishes was a sign to Peter and to the rest of the success with which they should be attended as "fishers of men." The circumstances of the draught, at the bidding of Christ on both occasions, first commanding them "to launch out into the deep," and secondly, to "cast the net on the right side of the ship," and after long and ineffectual toiling on their own part, served to deliver them from self-confidence, and to fix their entire confidence upon the guidance and help of their Lord.

No doubt the breaking of the net, and the almost sinking of the boats at the first capture, and the emphatic notice on the second occasion that though the multitude of the fishes enclosed was great, yet the net did not break, are not without spiritual meaning. All the facts illustrated the deeper and more real work of calling and confirming His servants in which the Lord was then engaged. The Lord first appro-

priated and made use of Simon's ship before He called Simon himself to be His apostle. He taught the people from the ship, and then called the owner of the ship himself to teach in like sort. He who placed his ship at the Lord's disposal was greatly honoured. The Lord was able to do that day in the boat of the Galilean fishermen what the high priests and guardians of God's Law in Israel would not allow Him to do from the Temple at Jerusalem. It has been ever so. Even in our own days private houses have been places of refuge for truth which was banished from churches; prayers have been made in them to God which could not find utterance in any sanctuary, before any altar, by the mouth of any priest. God, who rewarded Simon for the use of his ship, knows how to reward abundantly every service which is rendered unto Him whom He hath sent; and those in whose houses Christ was honoured, upon them did God set abundant honour. May the honour abide and never be forfeited by the giving back again to the world and to sin of that which was once consecrated unto the Lord. In the gospel we see Simon yielding his ship unto the Lord, but afraid to yield himself. "He fell down at Jesus' knees" and prayed the prayer which was not answered, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The Lord did not depart from him, but he "drew" Peter and his partners, and they "ran after" Him. "When they had brought their ships to land they forsook all and followed Him." Because thou art a sinful man, Simon, the Lord will not depart from thee, but thou shalt forsake all and follow Him. In the epistle we have the proof that the Lord did not depart from Peter. The Lord found him washing *his own net* for the capture of fishes; behold him in the epistle washing *God's net*, into which men are gathered, men of all nations, and tongues, and peoples, to be brought unto God as His peculiar treasure. He labours to make the Church a holy place indeed, where men may be safely kept for God, where He may prepare them for Heaven, and give them many earnest of that for which they are prepared.

What a glorious sight for the angels of God to look down upon in the midst of the moral ruins of a fallen world, that building of God growing up under the hands of the ministers of Christ, that blessed society made one by truth in the mind, by love in the heart, by pity in the spirit, by courtesy in manners; where evil should not be retorted for evil, nor railing for railing, but in the act should be found beneficence and on the tongue blessing! St. Peter presents to us the Church as for a time even charming the world out of its hatred of goodness, as living its happy life and seeing good days, before provoking by its righteousness the world's persecution. The Church, speaking no evil, not from a guileful and treacherous spirit using fair words with a false heart, but speaking no evil because intending none, following after peace and doing good, should find by the good providence of God for a time even her enemies to be at peace with her. To the natural mother of the Lord it was given of God to say, "All generations shall call me blessed." The Church, the mystical mother, is also called to inherit blessing, blessing from God and from man. She by whom the Redeemer found an entrance into the world which He came to save shall be blessed of all. The Church, which affords to Him when found in the world liberty of action, a place wherein He may stand, from whence He may speak and act, shall be blessed of God in time and through eternity; and shall also receive honour and blessing from men, as well as persecution at their hands, on its progress to its everlasting reward, and shall be welcomed by the whole creation into its inheritance of peace and glory. The manifestation of the sons of God will gladden God's universe. To be blessed and to bless is our high calling. Even now the Church receives an earnest from men as well as from God. Persecution sometimes is relaxed, and peace, and even outward prosperity, seem to be the lot of the faithful. There is a time for growing in favour with God and man, as there is a time for being hated of all men for God's sake, and for seeming even to be forsaken by

God Himself. The obtaining of the "good days" by the conduct of the Church which gains them is the proof that the suffering which follows is indeed for righteousness' sake, and that the world which inflicts suffering upon those whom before it blessed is inexcusable. The judge who condemned Christ to death was compelled first by the force of truth to say, "I find no fault in Him." This honour would God put upon the Church also, to be faultless before His throne, and to be pronounced faultless by the world which afterwards condemns it to destruction. Before the end of the Christian dispensation God grants to His Church a season of rest, to be employed in sealing His servants. Angels hold back the winds of Heaven from blowing upon the earth until this work be done. We live yet in the days of the "open door." He who enabled one of old to say, "A great and effectual door is opened unto me," has set before His Church in these days an "open door." He who "opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" in the beginning has stirred up some in these last days to remind them of the faith once delivered unto the saints. He has opened the nations to the entrance of the truth, and is opening them more and more, until at least a remnant be saved. The hand of violence has not been laid upon His servants. They have seen black clouds gathering, they have heard the murmur of the held-back storms, but still the door is kept open. May the peace of the world not be utterly broken till all the nations of the world in covenant with God have heard that He is still mindful of His covenant, and ready to save to the uttermost those who remember it with Him. The eyes of the Lord are still over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers. His eye is over them to find out a place for them, to set them in the place where they can serve Him best. When found in their right place and made sensible of their true wants, His ears are open to the prayers by which they make known their necessities, their own necessities, the necessities of the Church in their day, the necessities of the whole

groaning creation. God's eye of regard is fixed upon those who know His purpose, and desire and labour for its accomplishment. His ear is attentive to their words because they interpret His own "good and acceptable and perfect will." God's people who please Him are here known by two marks, *they do righteousness and make prayers*. He keeps the world from collapse and ruin till the work of the righteous be done and their prayers be all said. The work of righteousness is to give Christ liberty to speak and to act, to minister from the ship first and then to gather into the ship the multitude that the world must yield unto God, as the Sea of Galilee yielded up the great draught of fishes. After the long trial of patience to those who, notwithstanding failure upon failure to the eye of sense, still abide in their calling, the Lord will come with abundant supply, as to the wearied fishermen of old. They shall see, like Himself, of the travail of their soul and shall be satisfied. They sowed in tears and shall reap in joy; they shall return again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. Amen.

## LXI.

### SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—ROM. vi. 3, &c. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. v. 20.

THE gospel for the day contains Christ's condemnation of the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; the epistle connected with it defines the righteousness with which God is well pleased. The Scribes were men who undertook to explain God's word without all the help for its exposition that God would give them. The Pharisees tried to keep the Law as the Scribes explained it, and not as God Himself would interpret it. They supposed themselves to be the righteous leaders of a righteous nation, which was keeping the Law, and consequently was fitted to enter into the land of promise, and possess the Kingdom. The Scribes and Pharisees were instructed out of God's word, and separated unto God's service, not according to God's manner of instruction, nor after His way of separation.

The epistle for the day shews us how, and how only, we can escape from being Scribes and Pharisees in the sight of God. For Scribes and Pharisees were not special to the Jewish religion, they reappear under forms more odious and with work more deadly in the Christian Church. Christian Scribes and Pharisees are those who strive to understand Christianity and to practise it without the ability for both which is derived from union with Christ Himself. Either they despise baptism and devise some other way of separating themselves unto the service of God, or else they hold to baptism, and, it may be, commend it highly, even to



exaggeration, without understanding what it means, and without receiving and making use of what it conveys.

Baptism rightly understood and rightly made use of is the great preservative of the Christian Church against the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees, which God will not accept. Baptism signifies that which we must have before we can "live unto God" in the true and full sense of the words. Baptism signifies that condition to which Christ has raised our nature in His own person, the condition whereunto we must attain by living in Christ and abiding in Him unto the end. Baptism signifies our death as God's creatures after creation fallen, and our reproduction as God's children, to be kept for ever from falling by His mighty power by union never to be broken with His dear Son. The reproduction of humanity is the doctrine taught in the sacrament of baptism. The whole creation has been made new by Him who redeemed it. We are united to Him that we may be made new creatures, possessors of such a soul of love for God and zeal for His service as Christ brought into human flesh; possessors of bodies made like unto the glorious body which Christ raised from the dead and carried with Him into the highest Heavens, even unto the right hand of God. Baptism preaches unto us a remaking, a regeneration of our human nature, which is exemplified in Him who is the firstborn from the dead, which we shall fully understand when we see Him again. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Baptism teaches us that our spirits are even now quickened by union with Christ, and that our bodies shall rise again from their graves or be changed without death and burial into the likeness of His body. When this double change in our spirit and in our bodies shall have passed upon us, then shall we be truly separated ones, the wholly regenerate. Then shall we not only declare unto men what God purposed from eternity, but shall shew in our persons the fulfilment of that purpose.

Christ raised from the dead and ruling over the works of God's hands, and the body of Christ raised with Him and reigning with Him, are the fulfilment of the promises which God spake by His prophets from the beginning of the world, the fulfilment of all that was typified by Israel possessing the promised land.

They who know what regeneration means cannot account themselves as perfect or as fully furnished and prepared for God's service until the resurrection be passed. They must join with the Apostle of old who said, "I have suffered the loss of all things that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I had already attained either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Brethren (he says to all and for ever), be followers of me in this, for our conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Paul is a Pharisee no longer, but he looks forward to the day when he shall be the true Nazarite, and until that day he is detained by no attainment, but is as one running a race, whom nothing may stop until he lay hold of the goal which gives him a right to the prize. The prize is the Kingdom of Christ, even reigning with Him; the goal which must be reached before that prize can be won is the regeneration, the consummation of which is resurrection from the dead. Our baptism into Christ includes the starting-point of the race and its glorious goal, the beginning and the finishing of our preparation for God's Kingdom. Let us

yield to the Spirit of Christ, who is in us, that we may become all that our baptism indicates. By the grace of God we can fulfil our baptismal vows. Let us not repel and keep far from us the Spirit of Holiness. But as in the summer weather one opens the windows of his house to the balmy air and healthful light, so in this acceptable time of God's favour unto us, whilst His Son is pleading for us, let us open every communication with Heaven by which the gift of the Father and of the Son can enter into and dwell in us. Let us use in faith the means of grace that we may know that God's word is not exaggeration which has promised to the faithful "that they should be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house, and should drink of the river of His pleasures." Amen.

## LXII.

### EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

*(In the times of the beginning of the potato disease, July 22, 1849.)*

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*Ep.*—ROM. vi. 19. *Gosp.*—ST. MARK viii. 1—9.

BLESSED are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. My meat and drink is to do the will of Him that sent Me. The satisfaction of the soul is derived not from the possession of dignities nor the consciousness of power, but from the habit of obedience. Doing the will of God we find rest. Take the yoke and bear the burden, and you shall find rest to your souls. A strange way to arrive at rest, says the reasoning mind, to put the neck into the yoke and to submit the back to the burden, but so it is; the doing of our daily duty is the eating of our daily bread. Happy are they who know what God would have done in their day, and by them, and who are employed in doing the same; their peace flows like a river, nothing can offend them. God's commandments are not grievous, all others are. The flesh and blood of the Son of Man are satisfying because obedience to God is contained in them; the flesh which obeyed perfectly we eat, that we may follow His example and walk in His steps; the blood which flowed in undefiled streams of holiness we drink, that we may be as He is, holy in the world as He was holy in the world. The Eucharist is no satisfaction to our souls if it bring not to us holy flesh. All ministrations of grace in the Church are unsatisfying if they do not make us abound in obedience. The Church expresses this in the collect prefixed to the epistle and gospel of this day, in

the words, "Nourish us with all goodness, and of Thy great mercy keep us in the same." Infused righteousness is our meat and drink, as the imputed righteousness of our Lord is the broad and secure refuge under which we partake of it. Therefore we have in the epistle the Church presented before God for holiness, and in the gospel the multitude waiting upon Christ to be fed. He had compassion upon the multitude and suffered them not to go empty away. How much more will He have compassion on those who are desiring to receive from Him the meat which endureth unto everlasting life. Can a woman forget her sucking child? Who gave the mother her abundant supply and her instincts of liberality? He who would not have the beasts of the field disappointed when they seek their meat from Him, shall He not have compassion upon His elect, which cry unto Him daily? If we seek high places and great gifts for ourselves we may be put back in mercy by Him who would save us by His refusal from responsibilities we should fail under, from slippery places where we might fall ourselves and cause many to stumble; but if our meat and drink be to know and to do His will, surely He can feed us to the full. He can say to us, Eat and drink abundantly. The Scriptures of this day do remarkably apply to the wants of the day. Men are wandering up and down for food and are not satisfied; famine is in divers places. In the land which flowed with milk and honey, the glory of all lands, there was found at the feet of Christ a famishing multitude. On the earth now, which, held in the fear of God and cultivated under His blessing, would suffice for its population a hundred times multiplied, men are dying while we speak, and almost at our doors, for absolute want of food. And in the Church where God has spread a table, and where the provision is worthy of the Provider, men are pining away as if uncared for, saying in spirit, if not with words, The Lord hath forsaken us, our God hath forgotten us, there is no hope; why is there a famine of the food of this life? why is there a famine of the word of God? The

Church, hungering and thirsting for holiness, shall have the food of this life too, and be a steward for God, as Joseph was in Egypt, in behalf of the nations of the earth. The order in the epistle and gospel is God's order; first the eternal meat and drink, even conformity to God, then the temporal supplies. The higher the Church rises into the former, the more abundantly she can be trusted with the latter. Persecution and bereavement are necessary for those who are planning to be rich and great now; abundance unsought for, and peace to employ it in the service of God, will be given to those who desire to be rich towards God, and to be His instruments for blessing others. Oh that men were wise, and would consider whence their help comes! The people who followed God through the desert were fed with food which their own hands sowed not forty years. The multitude who waited upon Christ to hear His words and see His works were fed by His hand. If the people now would wait upon Him, help should spring up to them from every side. Bring ye the tithes and prove Me, saith the Lord, if I will not open the windows of Heaven and flood you with abundance. Who can turn a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? Who can turn labour into vanity? Ye sowed much and reaped little; you earned much but could not keep your earnings; you put it into a bag with holes. "Let the people praise Thee, O God, let all the people praise Thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us." How can God give abundance to those who would waste it in riot and excess, or hoard it in idolatry? Because He still loves the world, and the day of grace is not passed, He sends the chastisement which has meaning in it, that the wise may understand and that all may repent. The blow struck at us, under which this great and rich kingdom is still staggering like a drunken man, was inflicted upon the meanest food of the lowest of the people; the higher kinds were spared, the lowest perished. The judgment said to men, Come up higher or die outright; live

not like beasts on God's fruitful earth, but feast as men, as children beloved. This corresponds with what goes on in the heavenly things; the outer court is given to profanation, the innermost sanctuary is spared; those who would attain to God's sealing have liberty to do so; lower forms will not be tolerated by God any longer, we must attain to the highest things or fail of everything. Not the ordinary Christian grace sufficient to keep us alive is now to be given, but the abundance by which we shall be made perfect. And if we will not be made perfect we shall be nothing; every one who dwells upon the earth shall be trodden down by him who has his hour given to him, and whose hour is well nigh come. Those who are sealed by the Lamb escape him, and none others; they who will live at all must live after the most glorious fashion. Knowing this, let us draw nigh with a true heart, and be willing to receive from God all that the sacred elements which we handle signify before us and seal us unto. Amen.

## LXIII.

### NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—ROM. viii. 12. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. vii. 15.

CHRIST is the Heir of God and the Image of God. He makes us who are united to Him joint heirs with Him and partakers of His holiness. They are false prophets who do not tell us that we are heirs of God and that we must be made like unto Him whom we are to inherit, but who hold forth to us a future which is not the Kingdom of God, and a preparation for that future which is not the holiness of Christ. The members of the Church filled with the Holy Ghost are contrasted with the false prophets. The Church by the Holy Ghost knows and proclaims every consummation and the way that leads to it. The wicked walk in darkness; the end of the false prophets' walk is the lake of fire. The gospel calls us to inherit God. Baptism marks us off for that wonderful destiny. Who can tell what the inheritance is worth? What riches, what honours, what extent of dominion, what duration of rule, what amount of happiness, what power of doing good and of dispensing blessing belong to him who is heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ? Can all the angels of Heaven and the inhabitants of the earth calculate the sum? If that to which we are called be so wondrously high, must not our preparation for it be proportionately great? We count those happy and enviable who are the heirs of mighty kings, who shall possess by their right of inheritance more wealth than can be counted, all that well-directed labour and successful commerce can gather from sea and land. Yet what are the heirs of all the wealth, the distinction, the honour of this life



compared to those who shall possess what God will give unto His Son and to His Church with Him?

Those who have to reign with Christ have to be trained by Him first, lest when the time for giving the inheritance should have come those called unto it should be unfit to take possession of it. We are now upon our trial. The present life is the time of probation to us all. We are not upon our trial as to whether we shall stand or fall. That trial is decided. We have fallen. The trial is whether we shall allow Christ to make us fit for that whereunto God has called us, for which God wants us. We are not under probation as to whether we shall prove ourselves by our conduct to be fit for Heaven or hell. That point also is decided. The question to be settled is, whether we will allow Christ to save us from the "wrath to come," to prepare us for the "glory that is to be revealed." We are indeed on our trial now as to whether we will do our duty or not. What is our duty? The epistle before us tells us what it is not and what it is. It proclaims to us, "Brethren, we are debtors," vows are upon us, we are under obligations; but to whom and to what? We are not obliged to obey that which would compel us to act irrationally, basely, ruinously. We are not in duty bound to continue in a service the wages of which are death, the work of which is wickedness; in a service which makes us ignore and disallow all the claims upon us of God who made us, all the claims upon us of the creation of which we are a part. A service which makes me a self-destroyer, a de-throner of God, a corrupter of all His creatures, has no lawful claims upon me. The suicidal, the parricidal, the fratricidal obligation has no foundation in reason, in religion, in truth; I must, if possible, escape from it. Evil has no original legitimate right over us. Its acquired right Christ destroyed upon His cross. It cannot claim us now in justice, for the debt we owed to it is paid; the curse which it had a right to inflict upon us was borne by Christ, who was made a curse for us, who bore our sins, who died for our offences,

the just for the unjust. Our sin unatoned for consigned us to the tyranny of the author of sin. Our sin expiated has given us freedom from him who led us into sin, and bound us to Him who has made the expiation. We are debtors, not to the flesh, which was corrupted, whose work is sin and whose end is death, but we are debtors to Him who delivered us from every false position, who hath placed us in the position which we ought to occupy, who gives us the work which we ought to be engaged in, who gives us our right place relatively to God and to all God's works, and enables us to meet all the requirements of that place, to fulfil our obligations to God above us and to the creation around us, over our head, under our feet, on our right hand and on our left. We are indeed on trial now whether we will do our duty or not. Our duty is to receive from Christ the Spirit of Holiness. We must not let the flesh do what it pleases, neither must we strive by the flesh to mortify the flesh, but we must continually receive from Christ the Spirit which makes us sons of God; which shews us, being sons, that we are also heirs; which would make us think the thoughts, entertain the desires, speak the words, do the deeds, which illustrate the character of God, instead of those which distinguish the creature which has fallen from Him, which is abiding in wicked apostacy and alienation, out of His sight, away from His presence, if possible for ever. Our duty is to mortify the deeds of the body, to hinder from being done the deeds which the wicked one taught our bodies to do. Next, our duty is to go further than this, even to be led as sons of God. Having first escaped from the works of the wicked one by the Spirit which mortifies, then to do the works of the sons of God by the Spirit which leads. To mortify the deeds of the body introduces not to inactivity, but to action. Our bodies are not laid under a restraint, a bondage, which puts all their powers in abeyance, but they are given unto God to be instruments by which His life is to work channels through which His life can flow forth, means

by which His life can find expression. The works which God's love, and pity, and mercy, and holiness would perform are done by the bodies of His sons, of those who are led by His Spirit, who are set at liberty by Him from doing evil works, and also from the condition of doing no works at all. Holiness is not summed up in "Cease to do evil." Another precept is added to bring in that which is perfect, "Learn to do well." We have received the spirit of liberty, liberty from evil, liberty for good. This is our probation. Will we receive, will we entertain, will we keep this Spirit, who restrains us from wickedness, who sets us free for all righteousness, who gives us confidence towards God, who enables us to suffer with Christ, who gives us earnest and foretastes of the glory which awaits Him and those who shall be glorified with Him?

The epistle shews us the work of the Spirit of Holiness, the gospel warns us against false prophets. The false prophets do not make known the will of God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. They open the door for a spirit who is not the worker of holiness, nor the bringer of liberty, nor the inspirer of confidence. The false prophets do not know and declare God's end and God's way; they do not announce to us our true hope, or if they are able to utter it they do not lead us into the true preparation for it. The Holy Spirit of Christ shews us our hope and purifies us as He is pure with whom that hope is to be enjoyed for ever.

Twice in His ministry the Lord warned His disciples to beware of false prophets and imposters: once at the end of His sermon on the Mount, when He expounded the Law and set forth the righteousness which it demanded; secondly, in His discourse wherein He taught concerning His second coming and the signs which should precede it. On these two points especially would He defend His Church from false instruction, *vid.*, her holiness and her hope. Here, if anywhere, truth must be without mixture, where the subject treated is the Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof. Amen.

## LXIV.

### TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—I COR. X. I.    *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE XVI. I.

“MAKE to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.” A people in covenant with God, sinning against Him, and perishing under His judgments, is the subject of the epistle for this week. Their sins and their doom are held up as warnings to the Christian Church. They were baptised and perished; so may you. They ate the mystic food and drank the sacramental drink, and yet pleased not God; so may it be with you. The warning is introduced in a manner intended to rouse attention. “I would not have you ignorant,” as if there were especial danger that men should be ignorant upon the subject; and, in fact, the few subjects which St. Paul introduces in these terms are just those upon which the great majority of professing Christians have been most ignorant, and most difficult to be rightly instructed. The men of old were baptised unto Moses, but they murmured against him, and refused to obey him; they strove to do without him, and were unwilling to follow him. Christians may be baptised into Christ, and yet reject Christ’s claims upon them; they may refuse to consider and ascertain what their baptism means, and when they have learned what it means (in spite of them, so to speak) they may loathe and utterly refuse what it brings to them, and what it requires of them. The epistle is addressed to men who were full of confidence and hope themselves, yet filling with alarm and apprehension for them those who had the charge over them in the Lord. To trust in a covenant with God, and to glory in sacramental relations towards Him, while not fulfilling the conditions of

that covenant and exercising the grace of it, is pure fanaticism. Christ has not come to give men a release from duty, but to enable them to perform it. The parable which constitutes the gospel of the day occurs in the narrative immediately after the parable of the Prodigal Son, as if the Lord would by it guard His disciples against abusing the doctrine of God's mercy, which is the subject of that parable. To be saved as a prodigal magnifies the mercy of God, but to be preserved from becoming a prodigal redounds more to the glory of His grace and power, and it is the right and fruitful condition of man in covenant with Him. Therefore the Lord in the parable of the Steward tells His disciples plainly what He expects of them. They must live and prepare for His Kingdom, and use all the influence which they possess to bring others to it, to educate them for it, and fix them in it. Alas! who shall stand in the day of the terror of the Lord? who estimates with Him the true value of things? The thing which all men live for, die for, long after, is of no use in His estimate, except for making friends who shall welcome us into the everlasting mansions.

Self-indulgent, high professors of religion are set forth in the person of the rich man in the parable which comes after this parable of the Steward. The parable of the Steward offended the religious ones of that day who were covetous, and their taking offence at it compelled the Lord to proceed more closely, and deeply, and terribly with the subject. Let us seek an entire deliverance from the worldly spirit, which is the first mark of Antichrist. The first typical sin in the epistle is going back to the world, which at baptism we renounced. The second is making pictures of God derived from the maxims of the world, rather than from His revelation of Himself. The third is alliance with strangers who are His enemies, delight in the enemies themselves, and adoption of their hateful ways. The fourth is a loathing of Christ and of the ways of the Spirit of God. The fifth and last is a refusal to press into the Kingdom of God. The

of knowledge for the ignorant; that we might be able to trust in God, and to expect and receive deliverances at His hand; that we might receive and dispense from Him healing grace; that we might give Him opportunity to work through us, and in the midst of us, His mighty works; that He might open our mouths to declare His purpose from the beginning, and all the stages of its development, until the last accomplishment, the glorious consummation of all things; that we might be able to detect and eschew all evil spirits; that we might have communion in our spirit with God most holy, and might be able to express in intelligible speech our heavenly worship. For all these ends, for more than we can define, the Holy Comforter descended from our Heavenly Father into the body of Christ; but He was coldly received, and soon became as one unknown. Men have endeavoured to plead the cause which was entrusted to them without the help of Him by whose advocacy all gainsaying would have been confuted. In these last days God has called on those who bear the Christian name to consider the things which belong to their peace. He hath said unto us, "Remember how thou hast received, . . . and hold fast." Blessed are they who remember what they received, and how they received it, and who strive to hold fast the good gift; they shall prevail to go through every door which the Lord shall open; they shall receive in the end the welcome which satisfieth the wise virgins. Having received the firstfruits of the Spirit, they will wait for the full consummation of which it is the earnest and the beginning.

How shall we long for the coming Kingdom, with that holy longing which hath in it no discontent or weariness? The Spirit first saith, "Come, Lord Jesus." From Him we learn to say it after a godly manner. The Church having received the Comforter, shall wait for the Saviour. "Thy Kingdom come" is not the first prayer, nor the last. It is preceded by the petition, "Hallowed be Thy name." It is followed by the holy desire, "Thy will be done." The

name of God given to the Christian Church is "Our Father." The Lord said, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." Because we are sons of God, God hath sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, crying, "Abba, Father." Again, once again, it is written, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." By receiving the promise of the Father, we hallow His holy name, even by receiving "the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given unto us of God." We are sons of God, and because we are his sons we shall inherit all things; and He by whom we have received the life of sons, and the earnest of the inheritance which belongeth to us as heirs, is the Spirit of the Father and of Christ. Let us hallow God's name by yielding ourselves to Him who reveals to us that name in Jesus Christ our Lord. So shall we acceptably say, "Come, Lord Jesus," and establish the Kingdom of God. And we shall follow on to say, for we desire God's will to be entirely and perfectly done, Amen.

## LXVI.

### TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—I COR. xv.    *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xviii. 9.

“EXCEPT your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” The Pharisee’s righteousness consists in certain improvements or modifications of man’s natural condition. The righteousness pre-requisite to entering the Kingdom of God is the condition which we attain to by resurrection from the dead in the likeness of Christ. The Pharisee is man’s mimicry of the Nazarite. The risen man is the true Nazarite, whose head shall never lose its glory, the truly separated one, whom God can employ in the works which He has prepared for man to perform in His Kingdom. The righteousness which Paul laboured for, and in order to attain to which he desired to “know Christ and to be found in Him,” was, that if possible he “might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” We are united to Him that is risen, in order that we may rise also. Once we drew Him down to our fallen estate, and to the cross which it merited. Now He draweth us up to the condition of resurrection, and to the Kingdom which belongs to it. Our Lord longed for the resurrection which He called His perfecting; “the third day I shall be perfected.” “I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” That which perfected Him, shall perfect us. What He longed for is the legitimate object of hope and desire to His Church. Every member of the body is bound to imitate him who said, “I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” “One thing I do, for-



getting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" "for our conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body."

The resurrection is the goal to which we run, and the Kingdom over all is the prize which they shall receive who at the end of their lawful running shall have reached that goal. The first work which the ministry of Christ had to perform on the earth was to witness to the fact of Christ's resurrection; the last work will be to labour for the resurrection of His body. An apostle was obliged to interpose to save the Church from separating between the resurrection of the Head and of the body; to prevent the former from being a barren fact, having no practical influence in producing the other. So soon was the intimate connexion between Christ and His Church, the oneness of Christ and His Church, lost from the minds of men, that what happened to him ceased to be regarded as the example and model of that whereunto His members also should be brought. They who believed in the resurrection of the Lord accepted it as a solitary fact, and did not wait for their own, as the appointed and necessary consequence of it. Paul does not labour in this epistle to the Corinthians to establish in the faith of the Church the fact of Christ's resurrection; but to make the Church think of her own as the consequence and complement of His. And what Church was suffering its hope to be stolen from it? That which had in possession the mightiest earnestness which could be afforded; a Church which came behind in no gift that could be given before the second advent of the Lord, and in which all the powers of the world to come abounded.

If a Church filled with all the gifts of the Spirit let go the hope of which all these gifts were the earnest, how hard will

it be to recover to the hope those in whom every earnest of it has disappeared. The Lord saved the hope from perishing by the timely correction of His servant. May He revive it again, and bring it into fullest activity amongst His people, by sending unto them again His faithful ministry! What an apostle by the grace of God preserved from extinction, may apostles, and all faithful ministers of Christ standing with them, witness unto with power and effect, and bring by the same grace unto the destined end.

The gospel of Christ's resurrection, and of our resurrection by Him, is declared to be that in the receiving of which the Church stands, and whereby we are saved if we hold it in memory. "First of all," most important of all, foundation of all else, I deliver this unto you. Understand this and you will be able to use aright every institution and ordinance of God. They will so help you to stand, and bring to you salvation continually, salvation from every enemy, whatever part of your being may be assailed. But forget this, and whatever else given by Christ you may have amongst you, you will not be able to stand, neither will you constantly experience God's salvation, nor give Him glory for it. Baptism saves us by the resurrection of Christ, and so with every other sacrament and sacramental rite. That is, if the subjects of sacraments are holding Christ as the Risen One, and hoping themselves to rise with Him, the grace conveyed in sacraments can be effectual in them; they can attain to the salvation in sacraments covenanted and defined. The ritual of the Christian Church has become a burden greater than the Jewish ceremonial, and a service far darker and more unmeaning by this being forgotten (that is the resurrection), on the holding of which in memory everything was declared to depend, even all steadfast standing and saving progress. Surely God has purposed to make His Church *stand* once more by reviving the testimony of Christ's resurrection and the hope of the resurrection of the Church. If we are saved by hope, is it not His mind to save us, seeing that He has

brought back into the midst of us the preaching of the hope so soon struck at even in doctrine and principle—so long struck down, as to all practical power and meaning? Shall we not be comforted and encouraged by this consideration, that the things which our spirit and mind in these latter days have been pressed to contend for, are the very things which the Spirit of truth strove in the very beginning to defend? But let us beware of the spirit of the Pharisee, which would make even the truth and grace received from God matters of vain-glorious boasting. Let us count nothing gained till the goal itself is attained and the prize is won. The winners are not congratulated until the race is ended. We have all begun. May God help us to end with honour what we began with joyful hope! But the task is not so easy. Paul said, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." There is great danger of not attaining. How was success to be insured? That I may *win Christ* and be found in Him. They who will receive Christ shall receive what He brings. But Christ is terrible to flesh and blood, and the present world He must destroy. How can we hold Him and those things together? May we be enabled to receive Christ, not as illustrated and dispensed by some ordinances, but by all. May we indeed eat His flesh and drink His blood, having no reserves, but desiring Him, and Him alone, and Him wholly.

Unto Him, our God and Saviour, with the Eternal Father, and the ever blessed Spirit, be all glory ascribed by the Church, and by all creatures, for ever and ever. Amen.

## LXVII.

### THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—2 COR. iii. 4. *Gosp.*—ST. MARK vii. 31.

IN the epistle there is a contrast between the chief minister in the dispensation before the advent of Christ, and the chief ministers in the Christian dispensation.

Moses set before men's eyes something for them to copy; the Christian ministry puts into men something which they have to develop. He wrote the letter of God's Law on tables of stone; they convey the substance of the Law, even the Spirit of God and of Christ, into the hearts of men. Moses ministered the form of righteousness; the Spirit of Christ is righteousness itself. Moses ministered the figures of holiness; in the Church of Christ the very substance and spirit of holiness is imparted. Moses made a tabernacle, exactly copying a model shewn to him of God; apostles have to raise up the true tabernacle, the Church, the body of Christ, the image of the Son of God.

"Such trust have we through Christ to Godward." We have confidence before God through Christ, confidence that we can do what He has called us to do. We expect to be made sufficient to our day, our trial, our work, by Him. We calculate upon nothing as from ourselves. We have no stores out of which to draw. Our sufficiency is out from God, who hath enabled us to dispense His new covenant, which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The Church of Christ is not without law, without rule, without forms. She abounds in these things; but we have all these things comprehended in one generic gift, from which they spring, out of which they are unfolded in due season and

manner ; they are contained in the life which is infused into us by virtue of our oneness with Christ. The life of Christ finds its delight in keeping all the laws of God, which are adapted to it. It rejoices in all forms by which it can express its hidden inexhaustible joy in God. The life of Christ flows forth in obedience, in manifold and well-regulated exercise, unto the praise, and glory, and worship of God. A loving heart overflows with expressions of love ; a worshipping spirit bows the head and the body of a man. Satisfaction in the soul makes the brow light and the countenance radiant.

Apostles do not set before the Church something extraneous to copy, but first convey into the Church the Spirit of Christ, and then help the Church in expressing that wherewith it is full. Natural life is not confined to one or two modes of manifestation, it shews itself in ways too many to be enumerated. . Who can count up the varieties of form and strength in the trees of the forest ; the hues and odours of the flowers of the garden ? The living sap is infinite in its expressions of glory and beauty. If this be so in nature, which must die, how much more in the life brought into manifestation by the Son of God, which shall never decay or be diminished, but shall increase and become more glorious continually for ever and ever ?

Men sought to set off Christianity from the beginning with borrowed ornaments. The Author of Christianity, through His servants of old, called men away from the folly of commending His religion to the wisdom of allowing His religion to commend itself. How shall you make men admire the lily and the rose ? By presenting them to their eyes decorated with ornaments that your hand can add to them, or by letting them appear in their own native beauty ? Let Christianity appear in its own loveliness, let the spirit which belongs to it have fair, and full, and undisturbed manifestation. Manifold service to God will be the result ; many devices for relieving suffering humanity ; many ways of shewing forth

the rest and the glory which await the whole creation of God in the Kingdom of Him who is the Maker, and the Redeemer, and the Ruler of all. Nature hath its outward form and its inward life. So hath the religion of Christ ; but the inward is first and the outward is the result of it. No power in creation can make out of a child a full-grown man, out of a germ or bud the full-blown flower ; the sap of life must work and elaborate by inward operation and processes the outward development and maturity. So in the Church of God everything must result from the Spirit working in us, and whatever the Spirit hath not wrought can only oppress and encumber. Paul said this in effect to those who were turning away from Christ and despising His apostles, and yet were full of hopes from leaders of their own choice ; to men whose fathers had wrought works which the world, although seeing them in ruins, is not yet tired of admiring, and who expected doubtless to improve upon the religion which Jews were bringing to them, as their fathers had beautified and perfected what *they* had received from Assyria and Egypt. What Paul said to Corinthians is more applicable to us in these days of boasted enlightenment and power. We once thought, fanatically it may be, concerning the Spirit of Christ ; we may now have courage to think and act independently and irrespectively of Him. We have found that the ministers of God amongst us are weak men, inferior vastly to other men whom we might name, and therefore may become disheartened, or hopeful of good from some other source than from the Spirit of Christ reviving the channels of God's blessing and working through them. The Lord has taken us in hand as the man of whom we read in the gospel of the day. We were deaf to God's voice ; we had never hoped to hear it ; we were dumb in God's praise ; we were little affected by all that He had done for us.

By the full and faithful preaching of the Gospel we were brought unto Jesus that He might work upon us. He separated us from all, as He took that man apart from the multi-

tude. Before he healed that man He touched the members of his weakness. He has separated us, and since He separated us He has shewn us in many ways where our weakness is, where we need His deliverance. Blessed are they who have learned from Him, who have not become sullen and proud with Him when found wanting, but have humbled themselves under His hand, and sincerely sought the removal of the detected evil. The Lord has said in effect to us all, and to each of us: "You have sought great things from God, you have done well, but here are things in yourselves which would turn all these good things when received into gall and bitterness. Will you be delivered from these corrupting and perverting elements, that you may safely and honourably hold the power? An unclean vessel turns into sourness whatever is poured into it. Will you be delivered from that which would poison even the waters of life, the wine of the Kingdom?"

Brethren, no two men are weak in exactly the same way. Avoid comparisons of yourselves with others, but your own detected sin confess, overcome, and escape from. All the baptised have a right to the table of the Lord; but after baptism, and after repeated and solemn renewal of the baptismal covenant, you may sin. Do not hide your sin like Adam, keep it not to yourself, come not with it to the feast, to turn the very food of God's altar into poison. Honour the Lord in the ordinance of pastor. Receive His absolution and release through the rite of confession. Let not the many and terrible abuses of this merciful provision in God's Church lead you to neglect it, or to think that you can prosper without it. Precious ointment upon an unwashed body is not more unseemly, nor strong meat and drink to a diseased one more dangerous, than the services of God's House are unbecoming to these who are not parting with their sins, and the food of God's table most perilous to the unconfessed and unabsolved. The Lord has put His hand upon our weaknesses, and if we will, He will take them away, and make us strong

where we were weak. Men said, "He hath done all things well," when He opened the ear and loosed the tongue of that deaf and dumb man. The whole universe waiteth to take up this praise, when the Church shall have come healed and perfected out of the hands of Christ. He sighed and looked up to Heaven in behalf of him; with groanings that cannot be uttered He pleads for us. *He looks not up to Heaven for us*, but in Heaven, at God's right hand, He appears on our behalf. Would that our ears were indeed opened to hear what He saith *for* us, and our tongues loosed to utter what He would say *by* us! We have more to hear and to speak than any who have preceded us, for we have come last in time and are called to assist in the winding up of the dispensation. The Lord will do all things well, in making His Church now sufficient for the work which we have to do. He is amongst us of a truth; He has given us many proofs of it. Let us draw nigh unto Him and receive from Him this day what He is present to bestow. Let us be true to Him who keepeth covenant for ever, and faileth not to those who put their trust in Him. Amen.



## LXVIII.

### FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—GAL. iii. 16. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE x. 23.

THE gospel relates what happened to the man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho; the epistle treats of a travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho in the spirit and mystically. It was a dangerous descent from Jerusalem and Mount Zion to the city of Jericho, near the Jordan and the Dead Sea. The Church was warned by St. Paul against making that descent. Our fathers made it and fell amongst thieves; therefore the stripped, and wounded, and half-dead condition illustrates the state of the best in the visible Church. The Church turned away from Jesus, and the blessing He had to bestow, to the Law, which had nothing to give unto us but a curse. Men said, "We will keep God's law, we will do our duty, and so shall we stand well with God, and He will love us and reward us for our obedience." Men say still, "We will keep God's law and be blessed." But the Law says, "Cursed are ye all; ye have not continued in the things which are written in the law to do them." Ye have not kept the law, ye have broken it; no man can be rewarded who has not kept it; no man can escape punishment who has broken it. One only has kept it, and God has rewarded Him. He who alone kept it was treated as if He alone had broken it. Every sinner was passed by, and the only Man who never sinned, who knew no sin, was singled out to bear all sin, to be made sin, to redeem others from the curse of the law, by being Himself made a curse for them. The curse which the broken law of God denounces upon every child of Adam naturally descended from that first father, Christ bore in His own person on the cross. The same Man earned the law's

reward, and endured its penalty. What He earned He earned not for Himself alone, but for all whose nature he bore. What He endured He endured not on His own account, but on theirs. There is now good news for every man; the task which he could not perform has been done for him; the penalty which he could not endure has been borne for him; he is free; he has but to trust in Him who made him free; to give Him the return of love; to accept Him for his Teacher, and Guide, and Head, and Saviour; to fall into rank under Him; to be with many, incorporated into Him; to hope with many, to be with Him for ever; to see Him in His glory and enter into His joy; to reign with Him in the Kingdom of God. Christ took our sins out of the way by His death, by bearing on the cross the curse which was due to them; and having taken away our sins by His death (since His death, and resurrection, and ascension to God's right hand), He has been building us up anew, after a manner and according to a constitution in which there shall be no room for sin. When He was with us upon the earth, He took from us what we had to give, *even sin*, and bare it in His body upon the tree, and took it away. On that day He was the Lamb slain, taking away the sin of the world. When He left the earth He went to His own place, to the highest Heaven, and sent down to us from thence that which alone could be found there, even obedience to God, God's righteousness. He sent down upon us, and into us, the Spirit of Life, to build us up in righteousness. Christ on the cross took away from us the curse; Christ at the right hand of God bestows upon us the blessing. He washed away our guilt by His blood; He infuses into us His righteousness by His Spirit. The Church sought peace in the conscience tortured by the consciousness of sin, by the sense of guilt, in other ways than by believing in the blood of Christ shed for us; and righteousness and holiness of life were strained after, without the help, or without all the help, which Christ could give from the right hand of God. When

we let Him go who took away the curse, the feelings proper to those under the curse returned upon us. When we suspended intercourse with Him from whom righteousness descended unto us in a river of life, all our sins obtained dominion over us; every assault of the tempter prevailed against us. Thieves overtook us, they robbed us of our peace and strength, and all but destroyed our life. But blessed are the eyes which see the things which we see. The good Neighbour has seen our distress, and has come to help us. The law which He laid down for a neighbour to keep, He has kept that law Himself, He has visited us in our low estate. The day-spring from on high has shone upon them who were in the shadow of death. God has shewn us how the Scripture hath concluded us all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. God promised to Abraham that he should be heir of the world. The promise is fulfilled to Abraham's seed, even to Jesus Christ. To all of us who believe in Christ will the promise also be fulfilled. Christ has obtained for us the promised blessing; He will prepare us to enjoy it with Him. Let us no longer strive to please God by keeping His law; let us please Him by receiving His Son. The Son hath begun in our day to set His members free to serve, and to please God. We can only serve God as members of another, not as complete and isolated personalities. Let every member stir, if he can, the whole body. Let the heart of the good neighbour be in every one. Let us remember that they are our neighbours pre-eminently who need our help; who have not to give unto us, but to receive from us. Let us go forth to our brethren in every land. Let us testify unto them of the grace which is in Christ Jesus, if peradventure by their faith and ours we may witness together the common deliverance, and see together that day which from the beginning the righteous have longed to see, even that day when God's Kingdom shall have come, and His will shall be done in earth as in Heaven. Amen.

## LXIX.

### FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—GAL. v. 16. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xvii. 11.

“WHOSO offereth praise glorifieth God.” To a legal people, fatiguing themselves and wearying God with many, and costly, and laborious services, He said, “Offer unto God thanksgiving.” To behold the works of God, and to praise Him for them, is the first duty of man. No other duty can be performed aright until this is done. The chief service in the Christian Church is called the Eucharist, or giving of thanks. We do not atone for our sins by the Eucharistic sacrifice, but we do thereby make mention before God of the atonement already made for us; and we bless and magnify His name for His unspeakable gift. We do not purchase a right for ourselves into the Kingdom of God by our sacrifice, but thank Him therein for the right which we have already obtained through the death of His Son. We can propitiate God only in one way, by rejoicing before Him, by thanking Him for what He has wrought in our behalf. How many have cried to God in their distress, and when He delivereth them come not before Him with thankofferings! Ten lepers prayed for cleansing; one only returned to give thanks for the blessing received. They all abounded in prayer; only one overflowed with praise. Nine hastened away as they were bid, to shew themselves unto the priests; one could not refrain from stopping on his way to praise and glorify God. They were in haste, perhaps, to get their cleanness sanctioned by the priests, and their return to their social position in Israel accelerated as much as possible; *he* was more anxious about

God's rights than his own, more desirous to pour out his grateful heart before God for his cleansing, than to exhibit his cleansing to the priest, or enjoy the fruit of it amongst his brethren. The Lord accepted that tenth leper as God's tithe willingly offered; his service of love was commended, and he was sent upon his way after his brethren with super-added blessing and joy. He had been cleansed; now he is saved. "Go thy way, thy faith hath saved thee."

God hath cleansed many from leprosy in this day. Are all the cleansed praising Him? A few years ago we all felt our leprous condition. Leprosy is the type of infidelity.

About the time when the oldest amongst us were born into this world infidelity held its high festival, and manifested its great triumph in the chief kingdom of Christendom. The close of the last century and the beginning of this saw Christianity abolished, and organised ungodliness established, in the city and the kingdom where the eldest-born of the Christian Church used to reign. The first kingdom that acknowledged Christianity first renounced it; the nation which first lifted up its hand in behalf of the Church, and spoiled the powers of the world to make room for the chief bishop of the Church and give him upon the earth a large and secure inheritance, that nation first lifted up its hand in open blasphemy against the Head of the Church and the God of the heavens and of the earth. The infidelity which in France prevailed to have Christianity proclaimed a fable by the voice of the nation, had all but triumphed in every nation of Christendom; in this land even we tried to keep ourselves from renouncing Christ by reading apologies for Him, and studying books upon the evidences of revealed religion. There were traditions amongst us that God's Son had been in the world, had wrought and suffered in it, and been received up into Heaven; but communications with Him had been intercepted, His name, Head of the Church, was practically, almost theoretically, forgotten, and the effects of that name were well nigh obsolete in the Church. At that time the eyes of some were

directed to the promises written in Holy Scripture, and half-doubting, half-believing men, in the anguish of their souls, cried unto God to give unto them His Spirit once more. Their prayer was answered, and those who had believed from books of evidences in the existence of God and the mission of Christ, became assured of these facts from the illapse of the Spirit of God and of Christ into their souls. Their unbelief was overpowered by demonstration. They were made to know that God is, and that He is found of those that seek Him; that Christ lives, and that men still live by Him. Traditions concerning God in the minds of men were superseded by the indwelling of God Himself, by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of His children. The Lord took away our unbelief, and made us to know what before we had at the most thought probable. He bade us show ourselves to the priests, as those who had passed from unbelief to assurance of faith, that many might believe and draw nigh unto God. But has our spirit of thanksgiving kept pace with our causes for thankfulness? Have we yielded ourselves to selfish enjoyment of our blessings? or sought to be filled with the worship and praise of Him from whom they have come unto us? Alas! how crowded used to be the prayer-meetings long ago, when we assembled daily, morning and evening, men and women, old and young, ministers and flocks, to shew unto God our desolation and importune Him for his consolations. How forsaken is the House of God now, when the time for praise has succeeded to the time of prayer! He that has heard the clamour, the wild, uncouth, disorderly, importunate cry of want, would that He might receive the well-ordered, comely, harmonious, heartfelt, peaceful, and joyous worship of those whose wants He has supplied!

Brethren, the Lord cleansed the leper when He heard his cry of prayer; but He pronounced him "saved" when He heard his shout of praise.

When we cried unto the Lord to take away our unbelief,

He gave unto us His Spirit, that we might thereby be enabled to worship God. The Church worshipping God He will come unto and save. The Spirit of God was given unto us chiefly for this end, that we might "with a loud voice glorify God," that we might worship Him with our body, soul, and spirit, that we might keep up before Him the perpetual memorial of His love to us, that we might joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. If we retain the Spirit we shall take delight in these works and perform them effectually. If we lose that gift, if we drive Him away from us, our joy in worshipping God departs, and a murmuring, complaining, accusatory spirit takes possession of us. The epistle for the day shews us how the Spirit was driven from the Church. By doing the opposite of that which is condemned in this epistle we shall secure His presence with us. And that He may have work to do amongst us, and be contented with us, let us be about what He is engaged in. The Holy Spirit hath undertaken to raise up in the midst of this world the pure and perfect worship of Almighty God, to cause the inward fire of love to burn strongly, and the outward flame of truth to shine brightly; to give the inward feeling, to draw forth the suitable expression. The Holy Spirit hath come upon us to shew forth by us that Christ hath a body, and that the chief work of that body is to worship and glorify God. Are we willing to be as this body of Christ? Is the spirit of isolation and separateness resisted as the very temptation of the devil? Alas! is the determination "to make a fair shew in the flesh," and to hold our own in this present evil world, to prevail over the spirit of consecration unto God? Brethren, that it may not be so let us one and all at this time come before the altar of God, knowing what we are about and doing heartily and unreservedly what we know. Let God's eye see no double dealing amongst us this day. We have come to represent before Him the sacrifice of His Son, and to yield ourselves unto Him, that the results of that sacrifice

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may be made manifest through our means. Let us offer Christ this day unto God, and let us receive back from God Him whom we offer unto Him, that eating His flesh we may be of one heart and soul with Him, the Head, and with His body the Church; that drinking His blood we may joy and sorrow with Him in the sufferings of His body, and in the hope of His Kingdom. If we all really partake of the one bread, we shall be made thereby one body. If we all drink indeed of the one cup of salvation we shall be saved together, we shall do the works proper to Him whose members we are, of whom we are made partakers in the mystical communion. Oh! that God might even say now unto us, "Awake to righteousness," that He might prevail with us, that He might have His way in us, that He might do His work by us, that He might receive glory, and worship, and praise from us, that we might now ascribe unto God and the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Ghost, the honour due unto His name for ever and ever! Amen.



## LXX.

### SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—GAL. vi. 11—18. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. vi. 24.

THE world says, I will not support Christianity unless I be permitted to make some changes in it, and put certain marks of my own upon it. Christians, through fear of being brought to poverty and destitution, comply with the requirements of the world, and allow the sacred deposit which was entrusted to them to be tampered with. Thus misrepresentations of the religion which God set up in the midst of men become prevalent, and religion, real and divine, is repudiated and cast out. The first world to which Christianity was preached was a Jewish world. Therefore the first mark imposed upon Christians was a Jewish mark. But the Gospel has gone forth into all the world, and every section of the whole has followed the example set by the first. In every age there has been a religious world, forcing its character upon the Christian Church, and hindering Christ from impressing His own image in all things upon those called by His name. St. Paul says that it was fear of the world which constrained Christians to submit to circumcision. They allowed themselves to be made bad Jews lest they should be persecuted as good Christians. Christ was of no repute when He was in the world; the world despised and hated Him. "Marvel not if the world hate you," He said to His followers. His followers grew weary of enduring the world's hatred; they listened to the world's overtures of peace; they accepted the world's terms to gain for themselves in the world security and abundance. The world has broken its promise, and will yet break it more and more. Its last work

will be to strip and destroy the Church, which had allowed herself to be made rich as the price of disobedience to the Lord and compliance with the requirements of men. Receive the Christianity which Christ administers at all risks, was the counsel of St. Paul; that will qualify you for the work unto which God has fore-ordained you; nothing else will. Circumcision is weak, and uncircumcision is weak; that is, human nature, whether under restraint or in full liberty, is in its present condition weak. It must be created anew before it can fulfil its destiny. A kingdom awaits it. Its regeneration is the way to the kingdom. Circumcision availeth not anything, neither uncircumcision. In one age restraint is the fashion, in another age liberty. One rule imposes ascetical discipline, another gives nature full indulgence. One cuts it down and represses it, another allows it to grow to its most mature size, and to put forth all its force. One school demands monkery, another developed manhood. But no modification of the natural man will suffice; he must be made over again and anew by the last Adam, who is the true Man, and abides for ever. "Let no man trouble me," said the Apostle. This language but inadequately translates the original expression. There is a play in his words. He says, "Administer not to me your Jewish cuttings; I need them not. I am crucified with Christ." You will need them not, he says to the Church, if you will let "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." Not marks inflicted by man upon your flesh do you want to perfect you for God's service; but you do want that which God Himself pours into your spirit, even the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Will you receive and retain that grace? Will you allow the means appointed by God to convey that grace and to preserve it to you to abide and to have free operation in the midst of you? Keep in the midst of you the Divine Spirit, and keep Him by honouring the constitution of God which He was given to support and adorn. The Galatians were allowing unauthorised and self-constituted leaders to hack

and torment their flesh ; they were not allowing men appointed unto that end by God to guide into their souls the river of life from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The Lord Jesus Christ is your Saviour ; part of His salvation is expressed by each of the names which He bears. Allow His whole salvation to come unto you by the grace which is infused into your spirit. Admit that Spirit into you, and cherish and reverence the gift. He will never leave you nor forsake you until He has made you like unto Him from whom He has come unto you ; until He has changed you from your present condition of humiliation and weakness into that of the strength and glory of the resurrection state. Those who shall walk according to that rule, who shall be presented unto Him in that condition, He will acknowledge as the true Israel, and will begin to manifest to the universe as His kings and priests.

“Let the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be in your spirit,” is the cry from Heaven to God’s elect. Let religious marks be upon you which the world will sanction, and admire, and reward, is the counter-cry, coming up from the earth continually. How shall we be strengthened to listen to the former and to despise the latter ? This is the object of the gospel for the day. The world threatens men with the loss of all things if they will serve God. Christ meets that menace with a promise to His followers that if they will serve God they shall have food and raiment. Seek the Kingdom of God and preparation for the Kingdom ; you shall find both. God will lead you by the safe way unto both, and until you gain both He will keep you alive, He will supply your need. When God led His people of old from one land of abundance to another greater and more glorious, from Egypt to Canaan, He interposed a desert between the two countries, a waste howling wilderness. Those who perished in the wilderness died not for lack of food and raiment, but because of unbelief. The Arabian desert between Egypt and Canaan grew no crops for Israel, yet Israel was sustained in

it. God provided that His people, departing whence and going whither He had commanded, and over the way which His hand marked out, should not want.

Men say in their hearts, Unless we please the world we must make up our minds to starve. Christ says, to take that excuse for ungodliness out of our hearts, Nay, but serve God and fear not. Somehow or other, from some quarter or another, He will supply your need. The world shall not starve you, any more than the wide desert between the Red Sea and the Jordan starved Israel of old. If you will entertain God's grace you shall be watched over and cared for by His providence. It was distrust in God's providence that made men hide and quench His Spirit, to please Jews first, then Greeks, and afterwards in succession all hinderers of Christ's salvation. To those who lust for the gratification of the natural life Christ promises not satisfaction, but warns them of certain disappointment. But to those who seek the Kingdom of God first and His righteousness, He announces present supplies as well. To them in effect He says, You shall see the Kingdom which you desired, and because you desired it other things which you need until you come to your inheritance shall be added unto you. But the manna fell from Heaven for those travelling through the wilderness, not for those who would abide in it. Let us not have our heart where we have been promised only food and raiment, but there where we shall enjoy a Kingdom that cannot be moved. Amen.

## LXXI.

### SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—EPH. iii. 13. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE vii. 11.

ST. PAUL feared that the trials which came upon him as an apostle of Christ would have a discouraging effect upon the Church.

The world hates God. When His love to the world was manifested by sending His Son into the world, the world's hatred of Him was manifested by rejecting and putting to death the Saviour whom He had sent.

Those whom Christ sent into the world to declare and administer His salvation were hated by the world as He had been.

Sometimes the world's hatred is expressed in fierce and open persecution; sometimes in entire neglect and contempt.

Whatever outward circumstances distinguish God's servants at different times, this mark they always have, the faith of those who follow them is tried to the uttermost. I entreat of you, and I pray to God that the things which have happened unto me may not work in your spirit faintness and despair. This was the language of Christ's apostles in the beginning; it will be the language of those sent by Him unto the end.

The mark of this dispensation is rejection of Christ and of His servants. This is the heavy trial upon the Church. How is the trial of the dispensation to be endured? By receiving the blessing from God which constitutes the distinction of the dispensation. The glory of the dispensation must be possessed by those who would not be overwhelmed by its shame. On the earth the Church receives trouble;

from Heaven she receives the Comforter. The greatness of the remedy is alone equal to the extent of the evil. That you may not faint and fall away, I pray God "that you may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." He does not pray that the temptation to faintness should be less, but that the power to endure might be sufficient. He does not pray that there may be less strength in the assailant, but that there may be the fulness of ability in the assaulted. Let the storm without, if it be God's will, rage with all its violence; but let the strength which God gives be within in the inner man, to prove that if God be for us all things shall fail which are against us.

I do not pray, said the Apostle, that your trial may be less, but I pray that God may give unto you His Spirit. And behold how the language used guards the Church against putting any limitation upon the gift. When he has said, "that you may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," he adds, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." See that you limit not God. Receive not only what He gives, but all that He is willing to give, and would have you to possess. He would not only strengthen you from time to time by the visitation of His Spirit; He would grant unto you the indwelling of Him who hath received the Spirit without measure; whose work, from the time of His ascension unto God's right hand until the end of the dispensation, is that He baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. I pray God "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," that you may have confidence in Christ, that you may not be ashamed or afraid of Him who bears that name, that you may not only remember Him who died for you, but that you may cleave to Him who lives in you. Possession of the Church by the Lord, dwelling by Him in the Church after the manner which His name Christ defines, this is the defence against all the assaults which would make the heart faint and fall away from God. Therefore the Church must not shrink from Him who brings unto her the Spirit of God

and teaches men how to yield to and employ the heavenly gift which God bestows. The Church must welcome Him. We must not say, "Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool;" but every one must give unto Him the chief room, the heart itself, that He may dwell in it as in the place which belongs to Him, which He may call His own, upon which He may count in His hour of need, whither He may call His friends, whence He may smite His enemies, where He may rest as a man in his own house, where He may work the work which remains for Him to do, even the preparation of the saints for the Kingdom of God. When the family bond is what it ought to be, wherever else a man is treated ill, he is sure to find attention, and reverence, and love at home. In His House in Heaven, Christ receives supremest honour. He is seated at God's right hand. Let the home in the lowliest place follow the pattern which is set in the highest. In the heart of every member of the Church, let God be seen, and Christ sitting at God's right hand. In the last days of the Church there is a high profession of godliness, but the god who is worshipped is not the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Antichrist denieth the Father and the Son.

The presence of Christ in the heart takes away faintness, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. He enables us to believe that God loves us. He enables us to lay hold of the love of God, as the roots of a tree lay hold of and penetrate, and spread themselves through the soil in which the tree is planted. You will not flee from God, but you will cling to Him, as the roots of the tree cling to the earth, from which they derive the strength which gives to the tree its height, its breadth, its massiveness. He enables us to rest upon the love of God as the foundation-stone of a building, and the whole building rests upon the rock whereon it has been built. Where there is growth and rest there is no faintness. The Church receives one proof after another of the world's hatred. Let us withstand the shock of this by receiving, one after another, every proof

of God's love. Let every generation of the Church receive God's love in general, and the special manifestation of it belonging to the day of special visitation. Let every one receive, knowing that he is not the only receiver, but that he is receiving with all saints. All the saints, from the beginning to the end, are needed, that the whole grace of God may have room to work, that the Spirit of God may have materials out of which to perfect for God His help, which He will employ in administering that world for which we hope, that dispensation of the fulness of times when He shall gather together all things and head them up in Christ. Every member of the Church in his measure, like the glorified Head in the Heavens, appears before God, not only for himself, but for all saints. He longs that all with whom he is receiving may be manifested together; that the breadth, and length, and height, and depth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, may be known, as far as the finite can know it; that glory may be given to God in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.



## LXXII.

### EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—EPH. iv. 1. *Gosp.*—ST. LUKE xiv. 1.

IN the epistle for last Lord's-day was contained the prayer which went up from the prison of the Apostle to the throne of God, in behalf of the body of Christ; in the epistle of to-day we hear the voice which from the same prison speaks forth unbound to the whole Catholic Church. The brightest light concerning the constitution and character of God's Church shone forth in a prison. The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, and which He signified by His angel unto His servant John, the most glorious vision of the trials and triumphs of the Church, came forth from a prison also. "The oppressor holds the body bound, but knows not what a range the spirit takes unconscious of a chain."

The servant of Christ in prison counsels no compromise to the Church whereby the persecution of the world might be escaped and its friendship secured. He prays to God that the Church might be filled with the Holy Spirit, and he teaches the Church concerning the result of his prayer being answered.

In the epistle to-day we learn what God desires to behold as the fruit of the bestowment of His Spirit, "one body," human beings united to each other, and helpful to one another, as many members are bound together to constitute one body. He desires to see His Church one body, and in that body one Spirit dwelling, even the Holy Ghost, the life, the defence, the ornament, the manifold endowment of the body; and in that spiritual body "one hope," the hope

of perfection, which the Spirit inspires, because He can bring it to pass : one body filled with one Spirit, and still having a hope, pressing forward to something greater than has yet been realised, even by the Church filled with the Spirit of God ; and that hope not seen in a vision only, but seen in a Person, in whom it is already fulfilled, who is perfected, who hath entered into rest, and waiteth for His enemies to be made His footstool. God desires to behold the Church pressing unto the perfection which the Head of the Church, God in our flesh, the Lord whom we worship, hath attained unto, according as it is written : We look for the Lord Jesus, "who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." "One Lord, one faith." If we hope to be conformed to His image, then we must trust in Him for that which we hope to receive from Him. We must have faith in Him. He has laid hold of us by many bands ; we lay hold of Him by one. The Word of God, the holy sacraments, the Divinely-instituted ministries and ordinances of every name, are bands which God has appointed and made strong for laying hold of us, and for drawing us up unto Himself. Our own faith is the cord by which we fasten ourselves on to every hook and band which God has given. By faith we see Christ, by faith we hear Him, by faith we eat His flesh and drink His blood, by faith we abide in Him. He dwells in our heart by faith. God desires to see the Church cleaving unto her one Lord, as the Lord Himself in the day of His humiliation and trial did cleave to God perfectly, trusting in Him who promised to deliver, and continuing to trust, abiding in faith, until the deliverance was accomplished. "One baptism." The Church trusting in the Lord, accepts from Him with confidence what He gives, a baptism with water, a baptism with fire. He yielded himself without reserve unto the Spirit of God. The Church waited upon Him in the beginning, when God made Him Lord, and received at His hands the promise of the

Father, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This is still the trial of the Church's faith. We prove that we believe in the Lord by not shrinking from the baptism which He administers. The result of the baptism which Christ administers is set forth in the last of the seven marks of Christian unity, "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." By that which the Lord confers upon us, from His place at God's right hand, we know indeed and witness unto our God and Father; we yield to Him His true place, which is to be above all, and through all, and in all. We acknowledge God to be above all, ruling and directing all, to be through all, working out the performance of His will through those to whom He has revealed it; and in all, resting in those for ever over whom He ruled, and through whom He wrought; abiding in them as a man abides in his house, as a man after his labour goes to his home for satisfaction and rest.

Here are the seven points of Christian testimony, the seven facts of which we are to be assured, and in which we are to rejoice. The first of them fixes your eye upon a community living as a body upon the earth; the last of them lifts the thought upward to God in Heaven, who is over, and through, and in that body, and every member of it; and the intermediate marks are the steps or stages, so to speak, by which the Church ascends unto God, and by which the great God comes down and dwells in the midst of the children of men.

Well might the Apostle say, "*I beseech* you" that ye keep this unity, that ye preserve amongst men this evidence of God's working. He presses upon us two things, very opposite in appearance, but very necessary to one another—vid., self-respect and humility.

His first word to the Church is: Know your calling, and walk worthy of it; know the dignity which belongs to you as the body of Christ, and be invested with it. The glory unto which the Gospel calls you, unto which you are separated by baptism, of which you receive the earnest in the seal

of the Holy Ghost, and for which you are prepared by partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ, shrink not from it, refuse it not.

His second word is: Bear your honours meekly; let not arrogance and self-importance make you an offence to God and man, but let lowliness and meekness be in your spirit and demeanour. Lay hold of the strength which is by the Spirit of Christ, but use it, not as oppressing one another, but as long-suffering and forbearing one another in love. Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let all have and keep the one Spirit, not for purposes of war, but for the maintenance of peace. Be spiritual men first, but as spiritual men be at peace one with another; and smite not the body of Christ with that sword which God hath committed to you for warfare against the devil and the powers of darkness. Let no man seek that he may be great, but that the body of Christ may be perfected. In its prosperity the prosperity of every member thereof is secured. Remember the Lord's word, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." He who spake the word honoured it first in His own Person. He humbled Himself, and God has highly exalted Him. So shall He do with us, if we seek not our own; but that Christ may receive His own and be glorified. Amen.

## LXXIII.

### NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—1 COR. i. 4—8. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xxii. 34.

THE gospel for the day contains the last question which the Jews put to Jesus and His answer thereto, and His question put to them which they could not answer, and by which they were silenced for ever. These zealous Pharisees and lawyers boasted in the revelation that God had given to them, and they desired to hear from this wonderful teacher who had appeared amongst them an accurate definition of their Law, a comprehensive summary of its requirements, something that would enable them to remember it better and admire it more than they had ever done before. They came to Him lusting for some curious, felicitous, novel statement upon questions which engaged more or less the ingenuity of them all. Their self-love was flattered in the commendations pronounced upon the Law which was consigned to their keeping.

They were the predecessors of men in our days who labour to procure accurate summaries of the Bible, orthodox expositions of the creeds, digests of canons and apostolical traditions, luminous and ornate discourses upon the whole cycle of theology, profound disquisitions into the nature of sacraments, and clear judgments upon their power and efficacy; in a word, exactest information upon all questions concerning Christianity that can be started. Those who asked questions about the Law did not keep it, nor seriously consider whether it were possible to do so, whether God had any help to give to one desirous to try. Christ's question put to those who gathered around Him and asked Him about the Law imported this: Are you in earnest, or are you trifling in this inquiry

which you make? I have told you what the Law requires in answer to your question; it asks of you to love God and to love your neighbour; the whole Law and all the Prophets are suspended upon that; if you will love God and your neighbour, then you may take up in earnest this subject of the Law and go through with it in all its details; you may study the Prophets and see what they have predicted, and take an interest in their predictions, and long for the fulfilment of them; but for a people who do not love God and their neighbour to be occupying themselves with questions about the Law and the manner of keeping it is extreme impertinence and folly. For those who love not God and their neighbour to be looking over the bright roll of prophecy and appropriating to themselves its glorious results is the height of audacity and sacrilege. Therefore, if you are in earnest in this question which you put concerning the Law, you are prepared to follow it up with another, Have you considered how you are to do what this Law requires? God did not give you the Law that you might admire it and make handsome speeches about it, but that you might keep it. Do you ever seriously think about the fulfilment of it? If so, you must be anxiously looking out for Him who is to fulfil it. God promised such an one. You must know all about Him. What decision concerning Him have you arrived at? *What think ye of Christ?* What dogma, what decision (arrived at correctly after reviewing all the evidence contained in your Scriptures) are you furnished with concerning Him? What think ye of Christ? You have thoughts about the Law, it is well; you can define it accurately. Can you accurately define Christ? They could not; those wise men, those subtle questioners, those profound investigators of the revelation of God, were after all ill-informed, half-instructed men; they could answer half the question concerning Christ, but were utterly ignorant of the other, although as clearly stated in Scripture as the one they knew.

So now, men who can glory in Holy Scripture and be in

raptures with church traditions and catholic creeds, who can wonder at significant rites and adore sacraments, who can test doctrines and decide controversies, they cannot attain to holiness and true righteousness, and will not seriously consider whether such attainment be possible.

The men that gathered around Jesus were full of questions, and of important questions too, of questions some of them important enough to be answered by Himself; but the question of all questions, the key of all the rest, God's question, which He wanted men to be occupied with and to obtain the solution of, that was not in their thoughts, it had not occurred to them, or, if it had, was postponed as of no real practical importance. Before the Lord judged His ancient Church He examined them in their catechism, and they could not answer. He will find out the ignorance of His people again as He found it out before, and by some simple question which a child ought to be able to answer. After all the creeds and expositions of creeds which have been composed by men, the last generation upon which the judgment shall come shall be found before its judgment ignorant of some important point about Christ, no doubt not the very point that puzzled the Jews, but some other equally plain, and simple, and important, some relationship of Christ to God or man or the creation which needs to be developed and witnessed unto, but which has escaped men's attention and is left out by them in their definition of Him, as "Son of God" was omitted from the definition of Messiah in the creed of the Pharisees. Who shall be preserved from a detection of ignorance so humiliating and so fatal? The answer is suggested by the epistle for the week. "In everything (on every point) ye are enriched by Him in *all* utterance and in *all* knowledge." To know what to say and how to say it upon every subject connected with Christ and His Kingdom till His apocalypse, this is what was given to the Church, this was included in "the grace of God given unto us in Jesus Christ." Where the testimony concerning the

Anointed One was borne this confirmation of the testimony was given; to those who believed in the Anointed One proof was given that He whom they believed in had spiritual endowment to bestow upon them answering to the type of the holy chrism; they were gifted with a knowledge of Him which nothing could go beyond but His own apocalypse (the literal meaning of the word translated here "coming"). "Ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him. Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

This is the Spirit in the Church of God guiding unto perfection the body of Christ, enabling apostles and all ministers to know and love and do their duty. We have sought unto God for this anointing; let us be willing that the power and efficacy of it should be manifested. Having begun by it let us not seek to make shift without it. They in whom the Spirit is quenched will forget all that they once knew and rejoiced in. They will not know God's matter in hand nor God's season. But if that abide in us which we have heard from the beginning we also shall continue in the Son and in the Father.

Let us therefore not let go our faith or relax in our desires to be filled with the Spirit of Christ. Let us come unto God at this time to receive from Him His unspeakable gift which He has given to us, and would that we should receive and enjoy. Let us come unto the table of the Lord as those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and we shall not be disappointed by Him in whom the promises of God are yea and amen. To whom, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all glory ascribed now and ever. Amen.



## LXXIV.

### TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—EPH. iv. 17. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. ix. 1.

THE gospel records the miracle which Jesus wrought in behalf of the paralytic man when He had come *into His own city*. Some of the people, knowing His power and willingness to heal, and trusting in Him that, being entreated, He would exert the same, brought unto Him a “man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed.” He was pleased with their faith, and gave more than was hoped for, first forgiving the man his sins, and secondly taking away his disease.

Before the Lord would give the blessing which they immediately desired, He bestowed another which would remind those that were before Him (for they were men of faith) of the conditions under which Israel had been settled in that land of promise, which then, because of their sin, had become a Roman province. “Ye shall serve the Lord your God; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.” “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.”

Health of body should have been the normal condition of Israel, sickness the exceptional case, to be accounted for where existing by special sin in the member afflicted or in the community to which he belonged. When the disciples, on one occasion, asked the Lord, “Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” their question involved some knowledge of the covenant which God had made with

His people. The Lord's answer did not absolutely disconnect the loss of sight from sin, but from the sin of the blind man himself or his parents, and was meant to lead the disciples to regard it as an illustration of God's glory, which consists in forgiving the iniquities and healing the diseases of His people. And the judgments upon those on whom the tower fell, and on those whom Herod slew, were not ordinary occurrences, happening irrespectively of special sins, but in the midst of a nation of guilty men were blows inflicted on some, that all might tremble. In pronouncing forgiveness of sin upon a sick man carried into His presence by believing Israelites the Lord seemed to say to them, Why should sickness prevail in Israel? What have the keepers of God's law to do with that from which the obedient were promised exemption? Before I remove the effect let me remove its cause; first must forgiveness be granted, then healing conferred. In God's Church, from the beginning, in proportion as sin is loathed, sickness is escaped. When the highest earnest of the coming Kingdom is sought in the way of holiness, then the highest earnest of it also will be bestowed, in the form of exemption from bodily weakness; the generation of the Church which will allow Christ to deliver it from sin entirely shall know Christ as the deliverer from death, and without dying shall be translated into His Kingdom. The gospel relates how He came into His own city in the letter, and what resulted from His coming into it; the epistle refers to the way in which He is present in His spiritual city, and sets forth in detail the consequences which God connects with that presence, and expects to flow from it.

The epistle for the day begins at the 17th verse of the 4th chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, just when the enumeration of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the doctrine of their use in the Church have been given. Having declared what God had bestowed for the perfecting of the Church, he adds immediately, "*This I say, therefore, and testify* in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other

Gentiles walk (as all the rest of them walk) in the *vanity* of their *mind*. I say it as a truth, and I witness unto it as a truth which has become fact, which is no longer abstract, but has been embodied and lived out, that you are no longer to walk in the vanity of your own mind, but in the certainty and stability of the mind of God. In the Lord who hath walked in the mind of God, and who will enable you to do likewise if you yield to Him, I testify this. Imitate not the rest of the Gentiles. They are in ignorance; their reason, the eye of the soul, is darkened; they know not how to serve God; the life of devotion to Him they are strangers to directly because of their ignorance, and the ignorance of their mind has sprung from hardness and unfeelingness of heart towards God; they burned as it were with caustic all tenderness and feeling and sense of pain out of their consciences, and then gave up the life which should have been devoted to God and made glad in His service to lasciviousness and uncleanness and all excesses. Losing a heart for God's service, they soon lost the knowledge of the way of it; ceasing to derive happiness from Him, they sought to find it in themselves. "But ye have not so learned Christ." 'The Church was to be preserved from following the Gentiles in this career of apostacy from God by "learning Christ;" by becoming the disciple of Him who hath the anointing which teacheth all things; by knowing the Lord as Christ, the Baptiser with the Holy Ghost, the raiser up and endower of all holy ministry in the Spirit; by hearing Him; not by hearing men speak concerning Him, but by hearing Him speaking through men; by being taught by Him the truth of God, not as expressed in letter and contained in type, but as set forth in Jesus, God made flesh; taught what God meant from eternity by seeing, through the Holy Ghost, what He hath done in Jesus and with Him. So learning Christ, so hearing Him, so being taught of Him, as to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and to put on the new man, which has been created according to God in righteousness and true

His people. The Lord's answer did not absolutely disconnect the loss of sight from sin, but from the sin of the blind man himself or his parents, and was meant to lead the disciples to regard it as an illustration of God's glory, which consists in forgiving the iniquities and healing the diseases of His people. And the judgments upon those on whom the tower fell, and on those whom Herod slew, were not ordinary occurrences, happening irrespectively of special sins, but in the midst of a nation of guilty men were blows inflicted on some, that all might tremble. In pronouncing forgiveness of sin upon a sick man carried into His presence by believing Israelites the Lord seemed to say to them, Why should sickness prevail in Israel? What have the keepers of God's law to do with that from which the obedient were promised exemption? Before I remove the effect let me remove its cause; first must forgiveness be granted, then healing conferred. In God's Church, from the beginning, in proportion as sin is loathed, sickness is escaped. When the highest earnest of the coming Kingdom is sought in the way of holiness, then the highest earnest of it also will be bestowed, in the form of exemption from bodily weakness; the generation of the Church which will allow Christ to deliver it from sin entirely shall know Christ as the deliverer from death, and without dying shall be translated into His Kingdom. The gospel relates how He came into His own city in the letter, and what resulted from His coming into it; the epistle refers to the way in which He is present in His spiritual city, and sets forth in detail the consequences which God connects with that presence, and expects to flow from it.

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holiness. This is the way to escape a worse condition of insensibility and darkness than ever the heathen world sank into. By ceasing to transact with Him who is called Christ the Church has become weak and dark; by refusing to resume relations with Him, and to know Him again as the teacher and the builder and regenerator by the Holy Ghost, the Church will tempt God to give her up to strong delusions, which shall cause her to descend into "the blackness of darkness," and seal her into the condition of being the "apocalypse of the mystery of iniquity" for ever and ever.

The holiness which has been pressed in general terms in the exhortation to "put off the old man" and to "put on the new" is again urged in detail. "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another." Do not give a wrong direction to any member of the society to which you belong; whatever member of the body bleeds the body itself loses what flows forth; if you mislead your neighbour you are involved yourself in the consequences of his errors; he cannot go wrong without loss to you. They who speak truth must not be angry, or at least must not sin in their anger. Having such a thing to speak makes one earnest, and earnestness exaggerated issues in anger, and they to whom truth is spoken more especially need to be warned against anger, for what is so hard to hear as truth? They who are angry must put away their anger before the dark season comes, lest they meet with the wild beast who goeth forth after sunset, the accuser who cometh to the angry man from whom the Spirit of God hath peradventure been grieved away for a little while, to tempt him while he is alone, to make him brood over his anger and sin in it like Cain. Let no one steal, but let every one strive to be a giver. Let no one defile with corrupt speech, but ever utter that which shall build up and establish what is useful. So shall the Spirit of holiness not be grieved, who seals us unto the day of redemption, unto the day of the

entire deliverance of our whole being and every member of it from bondage to corruption into the glorious liberty of serving God, and who gives now large earnest to those who grieve Him not of that redemption whereunto He seals.

Passing from the offences by which men do wrong to others, such as "lying, smiting, stealing, and corrupting," the admonition touches upon those sins to which the wronged and offended are most exposed, "bitterness and passion, anger and clamour, and all reproachful speaking, and purpose of doing mischief," those evil dispositions and powers which start forth at the call of revenge as armed men at the blast of the trumpet. However ready to our call and near at hand and mighty for our purpose in resenting injury, we must not employ them; we must overcome our enemies as God has overcome us, by giving men unmerited forgiveness; "forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." The warning against all that is spiteful and mischievous follows in natural sequence the charge not to "grieve the Spirit," for the Christian Church in which the Spirit of God shall have been long grieved and from which in the end He shall be forced to depart, shall become indeed the place of bitterness and cursing and cruelty. The Church in which the Spirit of God has been hindered has filled the earth with the cry and din of those evil passions; has not sweetened, but envenomed the waters of universal life.

The Church, recovering the presence of the Comforter and yielding to Him, shall attain to the power of loving with Christ's love and of forgiving with God's forgiveness. The inability to do this is the true palsy which takes away all our strength. He who made the paralytic man in the sacred narrative able to take up his bed and walk by speaking unto him is in the midst of us speaking to us. Yea, He is more than speaking to us, He is giving Himself to us that we might become like Him, as we become like that by which

we live, and express by our body the kind of food by which we are sustained. The Lord help us at this time to come all the way unto Himself through those outward elements which we handle, that with Him we may be satisfied, and from Him may come forth sufficient unto all works whereunto God for His sake has called us. Amen.



## LXXV.

### TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—EPH. iv. 17. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. ix. 1.

THE epistle for this day contains the first words which the Apostle spake after he had set forth the doctrine concerning the way in which the Holy Ghost would operate in the Christian Church unto the perfecting of the body of Christ. It is the practical application of his abstract teaching on the subject of the fourfold ministry and of the unity of the Church. He would have us to consider the moral end of God's ordinances, and by all means to attain to *it*. The admonition begins with a double affirmation, "I say, and testify in the Lord." I say the *truth*, I testify to the *fact*. The *truth* is that God will have His moral image reflected by men, the *fact* is that the work has been begun in the Church of Christ. The Head of the Church has manifested in human nature holiness unto God, and has instituted means whereby His Church can be made like unto Himself. *In the Lord* I can say what God hath purposed, for the Lord hath declared it. *In the Lord* I can testify unto it, for the Lord hath wrought it in Himself first, and doth still work it in His body by the Holy Ghost.

When Israel, according to the flesh, refused the Gospel, "God visited the Gentiles to take out of *them* a people for His name." Unto this people the Apostle of the Gentiles speaks. He warns them against falling into a moral condition like unto that of the nations from whom they were separated. The Christian Church was in danger of imitating every division of the great human family which had appeared before it. *They* all abode not in the truth which God gave

them. God kindled a light amongst the heathen which they quenched. The children of Israel turned away from the brighter revelation committed unto them. For the Christian Church was reserved, if they would perpetrate it, the sin of "quenching the Spirit," the last and most glorious light. The declension of all began in the heart, proceeded to the mind, and ended in the outward walk. They did not love what God gave them; not loving it they ceased to understand it, and could not receive guidance from it; and, losing the path along which the guide from Heaven would have led them, they followed the evil instincts of their own fallen nature and the wicked suggestions of him by whom they had fallen. The sin commenced in the heart growing cold towards God. Paul felt the coldness and estrangement towards himself as a minister of Christ, which had already begun to benumb the Churches; therefore he spake so earnestly. After telling the Church what God had bestowed upon her for Christ's sake, immediately he beseeches her to estimate aright and duly use the gift. *Do not with the Holy Spirit, His channels of conveyance, and His ministers of operation, what the Gentile did with the Gospel which was preached to his first father in Paradise, before he was driven from the garden which his sin had polluted and was renewed to his second father after the Deluge, the first terrible judgment with which the polluted earth was visited. Do not with the Holy Spirit, with the ordinances and ministries of Christ, what the children of Israel did with the Law which God gave them in the desert, with the Prophets by whom He pleaded with them in the land of promise. The Apostle felt the disesteem of her own mercies which had begun to possess the Church, and he warned all against the progress of it. Men were beginning to study truth under the forms in which their fathers had been taught it, and would not regard and esteem it in the development unto which it had attained in their own day.*

God's purpose was declared in abstract promise to Adam, it was shadowed forth in types and under many curious symbols

to Israel, but it stood before the Christian Church embodied in a man. Others, said the Apostle, have seen God's truth, God's purpose, which from eternity was in His mind; they have seen as it could be signified by emblems, and written in books, engraven on tables of wood and stone, but you see it in its ultimate accomplishment, embodied in a man, "truth as it is in Jesus." In order to know what God purposed from everlasting you have to lift up your eyes to Heaven, and behold a man seated at the right hand of God. That is the end of God. Rather the beginning of the end.

When other men, all whom by Him God is bringing unto glory, shall be perfected as He is perfected, then "the mystery of God shall be finished," the meaning of all His dark sayings and curious signs shall be fully understood.

The Church was in danger of losing the knowledge of God's truth, by forgetting the condition unto which Jesus arrived by resurrection from the dead and by ascension to the right hand of God, by declining, from the hope given unto herself, the hope of conformity to His likeness in the entireness of her being. Behold Jesus glorified! behold also the Church glorified with Him! That is the truth of God, the purpose which He announced from the beginning, His very true work which He is minded to accomplish. Let all men who have been baptised into Christ hasten unto this end. This is God's will concerning them. The fulness of God's Spirit, the completeness of Christ's ministries were given unto men to accomplish this. The means are mighty, the end is worthy of the means. By aiming at God's end, by employing the means which He has appointed for leading us into it, we escape the darkness which has covered the earth. But, let the Christian Church refuse God's Spirit, let her lose, and care not to recover, the many visible means by which that Spirit is pleased to operate, then what shall hinder her also from falling into ignorance, through which shall come alienation from the life of God, from the life which is according to God's will, and which is crowned with His blessing, from

“becoming past feeling” like Gentiles and Jews, and following them “greedily” into all unclean and hateful ways? The fallen refusing to be raised shall fall deeper still.

Let us enter into the mind of this portion of Holy Scripture, which is ministered unto us on this day. See how sanctification is dwelt upon in all details, as well as expressed in general terms and broad outline. By neglecting any detail, however minute, we grieve the Holy Spirit who hath sealed us unto the full deliverance. He has sealed us unto a day whose sun shall never set, and no beam of whose sun shall ever give us light to commit sin with any of our members. It is a day of *redemption*, when every faculty and power possessed by us in body, soul, and spirit shall enjoy redemption, shall be rescued from every bondage to evil, and shall be employed in the perfect service of God. The more we do give to every part of our being now the earnest of that blessed day, the more do we give joy to that Holy Spirit by yielding to whom we attain unto the earnest; the more we withhold from ourselves the earnest of our future blessedness, the more do we grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whose perfect joy is our perfect happiness.

Let us please Him wholly by giving Him liberty to work in us the goodwill of our God. Let us come unto Him in whom He ever delighted, who found for Him His everlasting dwelling-place, and still prepareth for Him an habitation. Let us eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man in whom God hath pleasure always. So shall He be able to dwell in us also, and rejoice over us for evermore. Amen.

## LXXVI.

### TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—EPH. v. 15. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xxii. 1.

THE first thing unto which the epistle of the day calls us is the accurate walk, the walk in which there shall be no false steps, no wrong steps, no deviations from the path which Another has trodden before us, along which He calleth upon all to follow Him. “Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.” Every step of His life was a step of love, of a love which pleased God as sweetest fragrance, because it laboured to bring back to God His creatures who had wandered from Him, and to cleanse them from all the evil things which would make them miserable in His holy presence. Christ’s love saves us from the curse of God, and endows us with His blessing. Christ gave up everything for us, and brought everything to us. He denied Himself; He enriched us. Through our riches He will be made rich. When our joy shall be full, then He shall see His reward. This is our life, our daily course, our walk of many steps, into which baptism into Christ hath introduced us, to deny ourselves for the sake of others, and to bring unto others according to our measure what Christ brought unto us all in immeasurable fulness. To love with Christ’s love is to bring unto men what Christ brought unto them, to receive them as Christ hath received them to the glory of God.

Therefore it is added in the second place, “Redeem the time;” buy up the opportunity, set a high value upon the hour of your visitation. “Now is the accepted time,” the season

when God accepts, when He holds an audience, when He has set before men an open door into His presence, that they may come and shew themselves unto Him, that they may lift up their voices unto Him and ask what they will. "Now is the day of salvation," when He sends down the grace which saves. Use this accepted time, this golden hour; use this day of salvation. Do not lose such an opportunity, whatever it may cost you. If God give you an opportunity of feasting with Him, buy it at any price. Do not think your money better than the merchandise which you may purchase with it. Imitate not the fools in the Gospel, who thought their fields, and oxen, and joys of home of more value than communion with God and possession of all wherewith He could bless them.

Love men is the first counsel of the epistle. Do not lose the opportunity of blessing them in the second. The opportunity of blessing them is that time during which you can obtain for them the Spirit of God, build them up as the body of Christ, and open unto them the Kingdom of Heaven. If an hour for serving God and for blessing men indeed be presented unto you, seize it with the eagerness of the wise merchant who knows the good bargain and will not lose it. Seize the opportunity, for there may not be many such in the history of mankind. St. Paul feared that the Church would not make the most of the opportunity which she enjoyed at the time when he wrote his epistle. Oh, there are times when the pool is stirred by an angel's hand; happy are they who enter into the Heaven-moved waters! They are made whole, and become witnesses to others of the grace of God.

"Redeem the time, for the days are evil." There are many bad days before you; do not trifle away your one good day. Now you may understand what the will of the Lord is. The means by which He can freely communicate with His Church are present; you may see the days when He will have none to His hand by whom He may dispense and manifest the grace which God hath given unto Him for His body. Paul wrote

these words from a prison. The fact that he wrote them there was a proof that the evil days were beginning. That prison in which his body was confined was the vestibule to a darker one, in which the Spirit of Apostleship and of Christ, the giver of Apostles and of all heavenly ministries, was to lie bound for many an age.

God said to His people, to whom He spake by prophets, "Behold the days come that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst." And apostles, in the beginning of the Christian dispensation, told the churches that after them should come wolves, and men speaking perverse things, false teachers with damnable heresies, whose pernicious ways many should follow. Paul spake of the perilous times, and John saw in vision the heavens darkened by smoke ascending from the bottomless pit. Many have been the days of darkness, and many are the places where darkness now so reigneth that light cannot enter. These considerations should quicken in the service of God the zeal of those who have an open door, who have the secret of God upon their tabernacle, His light in their dwellings.

Let us consecrate our opportunity to the service of Him who hath given it unto us. If evil days followed the first "neglecting of God's great salvation," they will also follow the rejection of His work for the revival of faith in His people, for the recovery of believers in the Gospel to their first love. The lukewarm estate, which He abhorreth most, will be the condition of those who, knowing that an open door into the holiness of Christ and the enjoyment of His Kingdom is set before them, refuse to appropriate the blessings. May we not provoke Him to let such a fearful judgment overtake us, but rather may we "understand what the will of the Lord is,"

and desire to do it. So shall that follow in our experience which followeth in the sequence of the epistle, we shall be "filled with the Spirit." For He is the doer of the will of the Lord, and He waiteth upon them who desire to do it. And being filled with the Spirit we shall encourage, and instruct, and help, and sustain one another; and shall be enabled to worship God worthily, and praise Him for His goodness, which in Christ Jesus our Lord He hath manifested to us. And our thankfulness and joy shall not be of that kind which disturbs holy order and relaxes discipline, but shall rather strengthen us in "submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord."

Let us pray unto God that He would cause these five virtues to abound in us: 1st, *wisdom* to redeem the time; 2nd, *knowledge* of His will, that the time redeemed may be well employed; 3rd, endowment with His Spirit in all fullness, that His will may be properly done; 4th, gratitude to God our Father for the heavenly gift, and to Jesus Christ, for whose merits alone we have obtained it; 5th, obedience to Him our Head and Saviour, not only in His own glorious person, but also in all His members who are made in His image, in all His ministers who hold His commission. Amen.



## LXXVII.

### TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—EPH. v. 18. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xxii. 1.

Wisdom neither wastes time nor misemploys it. The fool sleeps through his opportunity, or, if he be awake and active, expends his activity upon something else than that which his duty requires; upon which, when it is done, must be written, labour lost.

The epistle for this week tells us that the days of this world's history are evil days, days when evil is done and evil is suffered everywhere, and admonishes us to make the most of any bright hour which is given to us. It inculcates upon us the promptness and alacrity of the merchant (the man in his way of all men the most quick to see an advantage and ready to spring upon it), who, going through the market-place filled with sorry wares, finds one object of merchandise worth all price, and loses not a moment in getting possession of it. So should the children of wisdom know the day of their visitation, and lose no hour of it. So should they be ready when an angel from Heaven has stirred the waters upon earth to enter in and be healed.

Now is our hour, when our sun is shining, when an open door is set before us by One who undid all its bolts and bars and passed through it to the highest place; and has left it open for us that we may follow Him. The opportunity which passed away from the Jew has come to us. The times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled, though nearly so. Our summer is not yet past, our harvest is not yet ended; it is still the acceptable time, it is still the day of salvation. Soon the voice may be heard which proclaims aloud there is

“time no longer,” the opportunity is run out, the day of grace is closed for ever. The evil days in the history of the Christian Church have been those times when men have been hindered by their unhappy circumstances from availing themselves of the advantages granted unto them by God; when mighty obstructors of God’s grace have been able to stand between them and the bountiful hand of their Saviour in the Heavens; when the key of the Kingdom of Heaven has been taken away; when the preaching of God’s word has been hindered, liberty refused to His Spirit, and the true relation of the Church to her Head forgotten or despised. Many such evil days have been. Many are the lands which even now are visited by an evil day so dark and cloudy. Let those who have some light and liberty not provoke God to take these blessings from them, but rather prevail with Him to encrease them amongst themselves, and extend them also to others. Let us not waste one day of opportunity nor misemploy it. If we saw a man sleeping through a livelong day during which he had an opportunity of gathering great treasure, of performing great services, of obtaining high honours, how would our pity and indignation be aroused towards him. But how faintly does such a good-for-nothing sluggard illustrate the stupidity and baseness and sloth of those who, having set before them as their hope the Kingdom of Christ, an eternity of blessedness which God calls a marriage feast, and such a marriage feast as God Himself can furnish and will give unto His Son and to His election from the universe which He uniteth unto Him; who having such a reversion to look forward to, sleep through the hour of preparation for it, and are found when it comes excluded for ever by their own folly from the possibility of participating in it? May God deliver us all from this horrid sloth! But the slothful man who sleeps through his opportunity is not a greater fool than the wide-awake and active man who misemploys it. There are those who rise early and late take rest and eat the bread of carefulness, and reap after all only labour and sorrow. It is

recorded of one who spent a laborious life, overtaking all the learning which was pursued in his day, achieving by his industry the highest and brightest reputation for himself and the greatest amount of entertainment for others, that on his deathbed he cried out, in an agony of disappointment, "Alas, I have wasted my whole life laboriously doing nothing!" Therefore the Apostle says, in order that "time may be redeemed," that your hour of opportunity for working may be well and profitably employed, "Understand what the will of the Lord is," not merely what is His general abstract purpose for all time and for all creatures, but what is His present desire. Know what word He wants to have spoken in your day and learn to pronounce it. Know what work He wants to have done in your day and learn to do it, to take your part in the doing of it. When a man is invited to a feast he does not only go amongst his friends and acquaintance showing his card of invitation and giving joyful expression to his feelings. He also makes preparation for his suitable appearance before him who gives the feast and those who shall enjoy it with him. Now is the time to prepare ourselves, and to do what in us lies that all others who have been invited with us may also be prepared for the common enjoyment. They are our true friends who can make known to us God's present will concerning us, and who can prevail with us to learn and do the same. The will of the Lord is hard work. The whole world resists it; myriads of evil spirits skilfully directed by consummate wickedness array themselves against it; our nature recoils from it. Therefore it is added in the epistle, drink deep from the cup of joy and strength, that your spirit may not fail in the hard labour, that you may encounter all your enemies and overcome your own innate repugnance.

Men give drink to their labourers; so does God. He gives us not the juice which is expressed from the ripened creation, but His own Spirit, to make us happy and joyful in our toil, to fill our mouth with laughter and our tongue with singing.

After setting before us the terrible task to be performed,

the task of obeying God in the midst of a disobedient creation, and in spite of a disobedient nature, he adds immediately, "Be filled with the Spirit." Wine opens the heart and loosens the tongue of the natural man. So are men filled with the Spirit in order that they may make melody in their hearts unto God, who dwelleth in our heart and knoweth all its secret chambers, and may edify one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, that they may be a joyful company, not murmuring under chains, but singing over their labour, exulting in a service which is perfect freedom.

Oh, that we were all wise to redeem time, active to employ it in God's service, and filled with the consolations with which He doth strengthen His workmen! For it is only the workmen that receive the wine-cup. Men do not, if they are wise, give strong drink to the idle. Those who know their opportunity, and rightly use it in serving God, and enjoy God's Spirit whilst doing God's will, they are fitted to offer unto Him eucharist, to give Him thanks for *all things*, for the work which He lays upon them and for the strength which He affords them. And they present not before Him as the substance and ground of their eucharist either their work or their consolations, but come into His presence in the name of His Son, who alone is worthy. Their acceptable sacrifice is the memorial of Him. They set before God what He has wrought and endured and attained unto, as the perfect offering in which they have confidence, and with which God is well pleased.

Joy is turbulent; where there is much life and spirit there is danger of much disorder. Therefore the epistle ends with "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord." It is easy for the feeble to be submissive. How can they be anything else? But for those filled with power from on high to take rank under any being lower than He from whom the power has descended upon them is not so easy. For conscious weakness to be quiet and orderly is nothing wonderful; but in the Church of God they are taught to keep

rank who bear within them a force which the word of truth illustrates by water and wind and fire, the powers in nature which move all things from their places and bear down all resistance. But we are called to "submit ourselves unto one another in the fear of God." God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints. Every one in the Church must be able to say, I will not fear what man can do unto me. We must not stand together in slavish fear of one another, but in the fear of the Lord, who is the Judge of all, who is above and through and in us all. Are we wasting our time in making pictures of things which never have been, which never can be? Verily He who hath apprehended us, who hath united us unto Himself, who hath given unto us His own flesh to eat, His own blood to drink, who hath done before us first all that He calleth us to follow Him in, He can bring to pass all that hath been spoken, and more than we can speak or think, through His power working in us. Let us come unto Him now in the holy ordinance where we shew forth His death and where He assureth us of His life.

May God help us to lay hold of His salvation, and to prove it to the uttermost, that we may give Him glory, and join all the heavenly hosts in His presence in ascribing to the Lord our God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all honour and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

## LXXVIII.

### TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—EPH. vi. 10. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN iv. 46.

THE epistle of this day calls upon the Church to be strong, for we have to contend with those “who excel in strength.” The strength which we need is accurately-defined strength of position, strength of endowment, strength of equipment. Strength of position “in the Lord,” strength of endowment “in the power of His might,” strength of equipment, “the whole armour of God.” To no condition less secure than this is the victory assured. If we will not be “in the Lord,” if we refuse or are content to dispense with “the power of His might,” if we neglect to put on any piece of the “whole armour of God,” our defeat is certain.

Our first security is to call Jesus Lord, to take our places under Him, to be united to Him, to be in Him as stones in the building, as branches in the tree, as members in the body; to be in Him as He is in God the Father, one with Him, indissolubly one with Him. Organisation in Christ comes first, then mighty endowment. There is one body and one spirit. If the Church will be the body of Christ, she shall also be the container of God’s Spirit. If she will try to make herself, as it were, the body of Moses, the body of any sage lawgiver or potentate, Jewish, heathen, or Christian, if we will take any form but that assigned to us of God, even the body of Christ, we cannot go forth to meet the spiritual wickedness in high places wherewith we are set to contend. The body of the Lord filled with His Spirit must overcome. Jesus in His natural body overcame; in His mystical body obedient unto Him He would also overcome. The devil could not tear

from the Son of God His natural body, he could not undo the grasp of Almighty God wherewith He grasped in the greatness of His love His fallen creature. The Church abiding in her Head, obeying Him, shall never be separated from Him. He hath said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no one can pluck them out of my Father's hand." The enemies of the Church are mighty, but the greatest of them is only a creature. The Saviour of the Church is God; the destroyers are mighty, the Saviour and preserver is almighty. Satan before his fall saw the Son of God and did Him homage as his Creator; he saw Him again as the Son of Man, God in flesh, and dared to tempt Him to evil, and failing fled from His presence. When he cometh to tempt us, let him see not us, but Him in whom we are, who hath already overcome in our flesh in His own person, and will tread down shortly under the feet of His Church also the terrible enemy.

Our organisation as the body of Christ is our first defence. But let not the body trust in its organisation alone. Let it cry aloud for the power of its Head. "Tarry in Jerusalem till ye be endued with power from on high," He said to those to whom places were first assigned, and by His own personal ministry. "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Concerning spirituals be not ignorant; that is, concerning your need of the Holy Ghost and His work in the midst of you be not ignorant. Be filled with the Spirit. Seek that all His gifts be exercised. Labour that the fruit of the Spirit may be ripened. Order is Heaven's first law, but order alone is not the perfect witness for the living God. Order is waited upon by power, the power of the present One, who set the order at the first and ever liveth to sustain it and to clothe it

with authority, to make it stable, that full honour may be accorded to the "name of the Lord Jesus and to the Spirit of our God."

The Church which would gain the complete victory over all spiritual enemies being ordered in the Lord and endowed with the Holy Ghost, submits to careful training and waits upon all details of instruction and guidance. We rejoice in "the Lord our strength, who teacheth our hands to war and our fingers to fight."

Unto the body filled with the Spirit the command is given to go into the field of conflict; to that body every piece of the proof armour is given, the place of each piece is declared, and its use assigned.

They who have been organised by the Lord Himself and who are spiritual have their work pointed out to them. They must maintain truth, all truth, the truth which He who is the Word of God teacheth, against the old liar; they must stand for righteousness against the lawless and unclean spirit; they must promote peace, which he who is the murderer from the beginning seeketh to destroy; they must stand for faith against the apostate, for hope against him whose portion which he hath chosen for himself is despair; they must magnify the word of God against him who stole it from our first parents at the first, and ever since hath striven to rob their posterity of it; they must live by prayer, which the proud self-confident rebellious spirit despiseth; they must pray for all saints and in behalf of all the Holy ministries by which God would perfect them, that the Kingdom of God may come, which, to the rebellious spirits and to apostate men madly and unnaturally leagued with them, shall be the sealing up in the terrible pit, the casting into the lake of fire.

The nobleman in the gospel prayed for the life of his son, and obtained what he sought for. How much more shall they prevail and their prayer be heard and honoured who pray for the sons of God Himself, believing the exceeding great and precious promises which have been given unto them, who



long for the appearing of the King of saints and the uncovering of those who, though hidden, are prepared to reign with Him, and soon shall in the fullest and truest sense of the words be born again, that they may see and enter into the Kingdom which God hath prepared for His dear Son, and for those who through Him shall attain unto the regeneration !

Let us call upon the Church throughout the world, whether men will hear or forbear from hearing, let us call unto the end upon all baptized men to be "strong in the Lord," to be strong in the "power of His might," to put on from His hands the "whole armour of God," to "fight the good fight of faith," to manifest the second miracle of the Lord: the first, in His own person when the powers of darkness received their first overthrow; the second, in His Church truly standing under His Headship, and receiving His grace, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and proving to the uttermost His power to save.

May we be counted worthy to be numbered amongst those who shall have gotten the victory through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us, to whom, with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, be all glory and praise and honour, for ever and ever. Amen.

## LXXIX.

### TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—PHIL. i. 3.    *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xviii. 21.

IN the epistle for this day we are taught how we should be grateful to those who do us good and help us, and in the gospel how we should be merciful and forgiving to those who injure and hinder us.

See how St. Paul's heart overflows towards those Philippians who had been his benefactors. He loved to feel gratitude as much as to excite it. Charity delights in receiving as well as in giving. The Philippians had distinguished themselves for two things, sympathy with the Apostle in his work and compassion for the poor brethren. Hear Paul's testimony to this double expression of their love: "Now, ye Philippians, know also that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving but ye only, for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. I have all and abound, I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing unto God;" and in the very text before us: It is right for *me* to think this of *you all*, because you had me in your heart, and in my bonds. In my defence and confirmation of the Gospel *you all were partakers of my grace*; that is, you all contributed to the favour which I received. You *all* helped, therefore it becomes me to be grateful to all, and to hope the best things for all. Thus he speaks to the Philippians themselves, and in his Epistle to the Corinthians he thus speaks of them: "When I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man, for that which was lacking to me the brethren which

came from Macedonia supplied." Again, as to their liberality towards the poor, he saith to the Corinthians: "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us, with much intreaty, that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints;" which service of his he speaks of in the Epistle to the Romans in the 15th chapter: "Now go I unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." They of Macedonia, that is the Philippians, did it of their own free will and motion; those of Achaia, that is the Corinthians, were urged, not to say shamed, into it by Paul's pressing exhortations. It was this sympathy with those employed in Christ's work, and this love of Christ's suffering members, which made the thought of the Philippians pleasant to the mind of St. Paul, so that he could say to them, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you;" "in my prayers for you all I make my request with joy."

Upon these things he grounded his hope of their perseverance unto the end in the grace of God, and uttered to them the cheering words, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." His prayer for them corresponds with that which he commends in them. "This I pray, that your *love* may abound yet more and more;" causing you to know more and more exactly the Lord's will, and to *feel* more and more keenly for His honour; for love is the spring of both, of true knowledge and of tender feeling. May you have the love which is never at fault concerning the things of most importance, which ever "approves the things that are excellent," which sees on which side the Lord is standing, and stands with Him, which knows where the stress

of the battle lies, and runs with help to the point where help most is needed. May you always know who are serving the Lord, and be strengthened to encourage and sustain them in their work; may you always know who are suffering for the Lord's sake, and be honoured to comfort and succour them; that when Christ Himself shall come you may be found possessed of that which shall stand the light of His presence and make you to be without offence before His eyes, filled with the "fruits of righteousness," which He will acknowledge as those for the production of which He died and rose again, and obtained for men the gift of the grace of God.

Here is Paul's gratitude towards those that helped him. The gospel contains the counsel given to Peter concerning the forgiveness to be exercised by him towards those who should offend him. As the grateful disposition is pleasing unto God, so the implacable spirit is most offensive. Offences have arisen and separations have taken place in the Church of God. These things should never have been. They began when the disciples said, "Which of us shall be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" When the Lord heard this question from His disciples, He exclaimed at once, "Woe to the world because of offences!" He saw that the divisions of His servants and their contentions for mastery were going to rob the world of its blessing, to hinder that which should be its "salt and light" from fulfilling its mission of purifying and enlightening human society. If the only use the servants of God can make of their mighty gifts is to exalt themselves, it is better for them to be without them. When the right hand offends it must be cut off, when the right eye offends it must be plucked out, when the right foot offends it must be taken away. When gifts are used to make the possessors of them great, and not the Giver, they become causes of offence, and are only fit to be removed. If Christ's right hand offends His Church He will take it away; if His eye offends His Church He will pluck it out. He gives to men the law which He observes Himself. Gifts which ought to have made a

“highway for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over,” have been to them rather causes of stumbling and scattering. Therefore the God of Peace took them away, for He would not arm men for mutual destruction. The brethren are now offended with one another over the whole earth. Blessed are the peacemakers. God looks down from Heaven with satisfaction upon those who are really seeking to be reconciled to their brethren. One of the most remarkable features of the time in which we live is the struggle which is made to reconcile to one another the long-separated and deeply-offended members of the visible Church. The progress of this effort will find out the impracticable and implacable party. The warning given to Peter concerning the judgment which should overtake the unforgiving and unbrotherly is of great moment now, when if unity is to be effected it must be through all being willing to confess their own sins and ready to forgive the sins of their brethren. Those who have themselves offended on the largest scale may be found to be in the terrible delusion that they never offended at all, and were precluded by a decree of God from the possibility of doing so ; and, hardened and made cruel in their pride, they may spurn from them the overtures of peace tendered by their brethren. Those who will not receive the acknowledgment of their brethren in mercy, and make their own in truth and candour, shall be given up to the tormentors. But before the brethren can be reconciled to one another, they must all be reconciled to God. They must repent of the offence done unto Him in lightly esteeming what He gave unto them for their perfecting. They must seek from Him again what they wickedly lost. They must put themselves on a right footing towards Him. Then the next step will be easy, the recovery of their right position towards each other. God has graciously shewn us the first step to be taken, and we have taken it. Let us not retrace our step, but hope more and more to see the good result of it. Let us cleave to Him who first brought man to God, and then men to one another. Amen.

## LXXX.

### TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—PHIL. iii. 17. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xxii. 15.

THE epistle shows how we should desire the Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof. The gospel teaches us that until the Kingdom of God come, we should be patient under the yoke to which the sins of our fathers and our own sins have subjected us. The apostle says, long for the Kingdom of God; the Lord says, rebel not against the rule of Cæsar. The apostle stands as it were between the Church and Babylon, to hinder, if possible, the captivity into which baptised men were rushing; the Lord finds His people in the midst of the captivity against which they were warned, and admonishes them to possess their souls in patience; not striving to break their bonds in their own strength, but waiting for God's deliverance.

Had Paul's warning been regarded, the Church never would have come under Cæsar. But the Church has come under Cæsar, and no deliverance from the consequent bondage is possible except by real and thorough "repentance towards God," real and entire "faith in Jesus Christ the Lord," hearty forsaking of the sin committed against God, entire acceptance of the whole salvation brought nigh unto us by Him whom God has sent. The apostle said to the Church, follow me; behold what I am doing with respect to the things behind me and the things before; follow me in two things, in my renouncing as hopeless that which has fallen away from God and cannot keep His law, in cleaving with the whole heart unto Him who has led nature back unto God and made it perfectly obedient to His will; follow me in two

things, in looking for the end which God has promised, and in making no stage on the way to that end the object of idolatrous contentment; follow me in pressing forward to "the things which are before," in forgetting "the things which are behind." Do not, he said to the Church, try to stereotype and to preserve for ever that which is past. Press into and take possession of the meaning of the past, and let its form go. Anybody that is in it, any substance that is connected with it, belongs to Christ. Let Him do for you, and in you, and with you, and by you all that the ancient figures expressed. Do not circumcise yourselves over again. Let Christ circumcise you; commit your bodies and souls to Him, and wait for the finishing of His work upon them. When His work upon them is finished, God's work by them shall begin indeed.

Paul sought for two things: to be found in Christ in order to be made righteous by Him, and to be found of Christ in peace at His second and glorious appearing, when all made righteous by Him shall be changed into His likeness, their "bodies fashioned like unto his glorious body." These are the two things for the Church ever to have at heart: all that the Spirit of Christ can now effect, all that the Lord will accomplish when He cometh again "without sin unto salvation." He contrasts with this earnest pressing into Christ's salvation those whom he calls the "enemies of the cross of Christ." These enemies of the cross of Christ, for whom ruin is prepared, are described by three marks: they worship themselves, bestowing upon themselves what is due to God; they glory in things of which they ought to be ashamed; their conversation is not in Heaven, but they mind earthly things. They worship the natural; they glory in it, their mind is set upon it. Be ye not such, he said, to his faithful followers. Be not enemies of the cross, neither be its feeble advocates and half-hearted friends. Do not applaud the cross, but apply it. Let us not be content with wearing the cross where we ourselves can put it in gold and silver and costly gems,

shining in the midst of the other decorations of our flesh. Let us also seek to wear it where He who bore it can alone place it, upon our inmost being, on our heart and mind and spirit, on our thoughts, imaginations, and affections, our motives and our purposes, our designs and our desires.

The epistle would make us earnest in laying hold of Christ's kingdom, and in applying His cross to prepare us for it. The Gospel enjoins patience till the kingdom come. Have you sold yourselves to Cæsar? Pay him what you owe him; but turn to God with your whole heart. It may be He will deliver you from the yoke of the stranger. David, not Cæsar, shall be your king. The Jews who endeavoured to escape from Cæsar by rebellion were utterly overthrown, and scattered over the face of the earth. They rejected God's Deliverer, and they fell under the hands of the destroyer. The Christian Church, striving for the mastery with the kings of the earth, shall be likewise overthrown. Before the final overthrow there is a final proffer of help and salvation. The gracious Lord, by whom God would save, is rejected; the way is opened for captivity under that cruel lord whose iron entereth into the soul, whose prison-door is never opened.



## LXXXI.

### TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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*Ep.*—COL. i. 3—12. *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. ix. 18—26.

IN the gospel for this day we have faith shewing itself in prayer to Christ for the stretching forth of His hand to heal the sick, to raise the dead, and in pressing forward to touch His garments for deliverance from disease.

The hem of the garment was marked with especial honour amongst the Israelites. The hem of the High Priest's robe contained the pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and the bells of gold between them. (Ex. xxviii., &c.) And the garment of every one of the people should have the fringe of blue, by looking upon which all the commandments of God should be retained in remembrance, as it is written: "The Lord spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations. And that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue; and it shall be unto you for a fringe that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring, that ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God." (Numb. xv., &c.)

In the hem of that garment which the afflicted woman in the gospel touched both these conditions were fulfilled. That is, He by whom the garment which she touched was worn was at once the true Israelite who remembered all the commandments of God to do them, and the true High Priest by whom atonement should be made and blessing obtained for all the

people. This poor woman touched the hem of His garment in faith. She believed that she was in the presence of Him who was the righteous Man and the mighty Saviour. The Pharisee ostentatiously displayed the fringe of blue, but did not remember all the commandments of God that he might be holy. God made the dress of His people to be the constant remembrancer to them of His holy will, and the clothing of the faithful was made an instrument of working miracles. Elijah smote the waters with his mantle and they were divided, and the same miracle was repeated by Elisha. The dress of the Israelite which caused him when he looked at it to remember all the law of his God typified the "covering of the Spirit," the indwelling of Him by whom the disciples should be led into all truth, and be enabled to remember and to do all the things which their Lord had commanded. The poor woman knew, no doubt (for she acted as one believing what God had revealed), what importance God had put upon the garments of His people ; she knew what wonders had been wrought by the mantle of the Prophet. She seemed to say by her act, Where is the God of Israel ? Where is the Lord God of Elijah and of all the prophets ? Is He not with us this day ? I will prove it. She proved it indeed, and was made to declare it in the hearing of all. The confession of faith, if it do not precede, must follow the act of faith. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he who was baptised in unconscious infancy must, when he grows up, believe in Him to whom in baptism he was given. He must believe in Him and confess His name, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

The epistle and gospel are full of prayer. The prayer in the gospel is for deliverance from death, in the epistle for progress in spiritual life. We should join ourselves with the suppliants that Christ might expel death from us by laying His hand upon us ; that He would arrest disease in us by giving us to touch the things which surround Him, that we might

feel His hand, and that He might feel our hand while we touch His garments, that we might cause Him to come to us as to the ruler's daughter, that we might come to Him as the woman whose issue of blood was healed, that there might be within us and in the midst of us the faith which draws Christ unto us, the faith which makes us press through all difficulties and obstacles unto Him. The double miracle recorded in the gospel shews us our full duty, to imitate the ruler in praying to Christ to raise the dead, and, while He is on the way to perform that work, to obtain from Him by believing use of His ordinances the healing and cleansing of our life. These two miracles are recorded, and in the same connection, in three gospels out of the four. They illustrate the fulness of Christ's salvation, who, on His way to raise the dead, sets free all sufferers who trust in Him and use His ordinances, from their present misery. May we imitate the earnestness mingled with patience of the ruler, who first called the Lord to his house, and saw Him detained and delayed on His way to it; the energy and determination of the woman, which carried her in her weakness and feebleness of body through the crowd and press which surrounded Jesus, thronging Him, as the original language expresses it, almost to suffocation. So shall we see the double miracle of the gospel, ebbing life saved and revived in the dying Church, extinct life restored to those over whom death had triumphed.

Let us join ourselves also unto him who maketh prayer in the epistle. He maketh an eucharist first and then a prayer. The faith of the Church in Christ Jesus and their love to all saints filled the Apostle with thanksgiving for the hope laid up in Heaven, because their faith and love suggested to him the hope. He says to them in effect, The thought of you suggests the thought of the Heavenly Kingdom. You have that in you which is the preparation for and the earnest of the coming Kingdom, and you love those who shall inherit it. Your faith in Christ Jesus will obtain for you entrance into the Kingdom, and your love to all the saints will make that

Kingdom a place of ineffable delight to you, for none but saints shall be in it, and they will all be there. I know there is a hope, for faith in Christ Jesus must end in something very glorious, and love to all saints would not be given unless an opportunity of seeing all those whom you love were sometime or other to be afforded. We are made to love them; because we are destined to meet them and to spend with them eternity in the service and enjoyment and praise of God. It was not for the faith and love of the Church that the apostle poured forth his eucharist, but for the hope that shall reward them. The thangsgiving acceptable to God is that which makes mention of the things which are reserved for those that love Him.

Ye heard of this hope, he saith, in the word of the truth of the Gospel, in the word of the true Gospel. The true Gospel cannot be worded without this hope finding a place in its expressions. This Gospel which hath the hope in it is the fruitful one. "It is in all the world and bringeth forth fruit." In the midst of the fallen miserable world it witnesses of the full reversal of the curse, the full redemption of the fallen, and shews even before the land of promise is entered the clusters of the grapes which fill the land. It brings forth fruit because it reveals the end for which all things were made, and those to whom that end is made known can best fulfil the purpose of their own being, and, as far as their power extends, make every object in creation do the same. Ye *learned* of Epaphras, ye were willing to be *disciples*, and, being *disciples*, you found your master a deacon of Christ, a dispenser of blessing from the anointed One, and he could report of you that you loved in the Spirit.

Well, for such a people, the apostle could pray with hope the prayer which follows, which has been just read in your hearing, a prayer which embraces all knowledge, obedience, and patience in suffering. He prayed that they might be filled with the knowledge of His will, that they might walk so as to please Him, that they might bear every kind of fruit and

encreasingly, and be strengthened by His glory to endure all the trials and suffering which are strewn along the path of obedience, and finally be so filled with the glory throughout their sufferings as to give thanks in the midst of them to the Father who had chosen them to the inheritance of the saints in light, contrasting their position in the inheritance of light with their sorrow here for a season, and knowing that in that light will be cleared away all that now causes perplexity and darkness. Thus did St. Paul pray for those of whose faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints he had assurance. Following him, let us in our prayers begin with those of whom we have the clearest evidence, the most reason to conclude that they possess the same faith and love. Let us pray for those who have believed the Gospel of the Kingdom and have prayed for the earnest of it, who have not denied the name of the Lord, but have borne the reproach of His work. Let us remember the Churches builded by apostles and prophets in our own days, the evangelists in remote places, the brethren all over the earth. Then should we pray for those who are striving to know most truth and to attain to most righteousness, and so proceed widening the circle of prayer until we shall have embraced the whole Catholic Church and the whole creation of God.

## LXXXII.

### ALL SAINTS' DAY.

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*Ep.*—I THESS. iv. 13 to v. 10.    *Gosp.*—ST. MATT. xxv. 31.

THIS day again, by the mercy and long suffering of God, which have followed us through another year, we hold our commemoration of All Saints. The Scriptures appointed for our Holy Communion Service instruct us in our hope concerning them, and in our duty towards them.

The subject of the epistle is the translation of the living saints, and the resurrection of the departed, at the glorious appearing again of the Lord Jesus Christ; also the condition of the unbelieving and of the faithful anterior to the Lord's coming, the former resulting in false peace and security, the latter watching, fasting, and hoping.

The gospel, too, sets forth the glorious advent, and also the judgment which the Lord shall exercise, the grounds upon which he will admit men into or exclude them from His Kingdom. The essential mark of those who shall inherit with Christ the Kingdom prepared by His Father is love of the brethren, evidenced by actual help afforded to them in their distress. He who wrought the great labour of love is the awarder of prizes, and to the loving He will award them. The positive crimes of those excluded from the Kingdom are not enumerated, but their negative disqualifications. They are excluded because they had not learned to love their brethren, and had wrought no good for them. The love rewarded is not natural benevolence, but that love which expresses itself in zeal for Christ and in sympathy with all who serve Him; love to Christ, and to men as one with Him, and to the whole creation as bound up with Him.

The epistle teaches us what we should hope for as concern-

ing the saints, the resurrection of the departed, the translation of the living. The intermediate state of the saints, between death and resurrection, is not adverted to in the epistle. Nothing is said concerning the disembodied spirit and the deceased body in their state of separate existence, except what can be gathered from the expression, "them which sleep in Jesus," or, more accurately, "those which have been laid to sleep by or through Jesus." The imagination of man has heaped up much, a whole mythology, concerning the state of the departed between their death and resurrection; but revelation is all but silent on the subject. It is not said, "sorrow not for the dead, for their souls are in bliss, separated from this gross world and the encumbrance of their bodies;" but it is said, sorrow not for the departed, for they shall rise again; they sleep now, their works are done, their works follow them, and they shall receive a reward for their works done in the body. They work not now; men asleep work not. Their condition while asleep is not dwelt upon. It is their *awaking* which is the engrossing subject. They shall awake. Jesus has laid them in safe places of rest until the morning of the happy and glorious awakening. When He who laid them to sleep returns to them, they shall awake. No stranger shall disturb them in the night. The Lord Himself will break the sleep of His hidden ones, when He shall descend from Heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: the shout of the Lord mustering His hosts; the *voice* of the Archangel calling them forth, and delivering unto them God's last message of love. The *trump* of God, which he shall blow, shall awake them. Until then He shall keep them as a mother keeps her children in their beds till she awake them in the morning, with her voice of love, to the light and joyfulness of another day. It is the *bodies* of the saints that sleep. Concerning their spirits we only learn that they are with Christ, in His holy keeping; that they wait for the day of judgment; that they cry, How long?

The Creed of the Church, like the Holy Scripture, makes a great bound over the intermediate state; from the present attainment to the future consummation of the saints: "I believe in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

I believe that the saints have a common participation in certain blessings: forgiveness of sins *now*, resurrection of the body *hereafter*, and, *after resurrection*, life that will last for ever. Again: "I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and I *look* for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." The whole period of separation from each other of body and soul is passed over almost as if it were a great blank in man's existence.

God made man body and soul. While they are kept asunder much account is made of neither; every thought is fixed upon their reunion. The sowing time for every man is while his body and soul are together, and the reaping time will be when they shall be reunited. There is one hope only, and that hope springs with one bound from the font of baptism to the fact which consummates the regeneration which baptism conveys. The earnest of the Spirit is not the earnest of joys to be entered upon by the soul in its separateness, but is the earnest of the inheritance to which the *whole* man shall be introduced. The regeneration is not effected when the soul and body are separated; that is a taking down of the building: resurrection restores the house. Christ did not shew Himself to His disciples till after His resurrection. He was only seen by them in the body; first in His body of humiliation, then in His body of glory, in which He was exalted to God's right hand. Men will not be rewarded for what they do or suffer in the separate state. According to the deeds done in the body the judgment shall proceed. Those who shall reign with Christ are described by marks received in this life; because of what they suffer at the hands of the wicked for the testimony of Jesus, for the word of God, for refusing the mark of the beast.



*Here* the crown of martyrdom is won; *here* the witness is borne. "I have finished my course," said Paul; "I have fought the fight; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." He that confesseth Christ *now*, him will Christ confess.

*Now* is the golden opportunity, which is to be redeemed at any and all sacrifices. It being lost, there is no second trial afforded. This is the time for hearing the Gospel, for repenting from dead works, for being baptised, for eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, for being sealed unto the day of redemption. If we be shipwrecked here there is no plank on which to cling for safety in the world of spirits. "*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

There is no intimation that the saints departed intercede for the living. "I am in a strait," said Paul, "having a desire to depart; but to remain in the flesh is better for you." He thought not of an occupation in their behalf after his departure as effectual, or more so than any service which he could render whilst abiding in the body. The saints departed do indeed long for their deliverance; but it is we who are alive that must hasten the coming and Kingdom of the Lord and Saviour. *They* laboured for us; now is our time to labour for them. They who laboured first shall rise first. Then shall we be changed.

The saints are to be comforted by the words concerning their resurrection and translation at the coming in glory of the King of Saints, Himself a perfect man and glorified, to perfect and glorify them together. According to the gospel He will reward us in that day for our deeds *done in the body* to those who were *in the body* when we performed our good works upon them. I do not mean to say that our good works are limited to those *in the flesh*, and that the spirits of the departed derive no blessing from what the living and

witnessing Church is engaged in; but, however true that may be, the matter in the gospel is our condition during the time of our probation (which is the time of our sojourn upon the earth) towards those who are in trial along with us. Now we see men hungry, and thirsty, and strangers, naked, and sick, and prisoners; men whom Christ has made, has redeemed, has joined unto Himself. In proportion as we sympathise with them and make provision for them will be our reward at His hands. What we do for them He will regard as done unto Himself. This is true of the temporal wants from which men suffer; much more shall we be rewarded if we supply eternal wants. Him you make free effectually whom you make free eternally. Him you clothe, indeed, whom you array in a garment which will never wear out. Him you satisfy with food to whom you give the bread of everlasting life and the cup of eternal salvation. You will be rewarded as a healer of the sick, indeed, if you shall have been instrumental in bringing them to the life and health which are in God Himself.

The subject of the epistle and gospel of the day together is briefly this: that our time is to be spent in waiting for our Lord's return, and in doing good to His suffering ones until that day. So He lived Himself. He went about doing good and delivering the oppressed. How shall we go about doing good and delivering the oppressed, save by Him going about in us? "I will dwell in them," and "I will walk about in them." How shall God dwell in us and walk about in us, but by our being the body of His Son? by our living by Him as He lived by God? And He said, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood shall live by me, as I live by the Father," shall do my will as I have done the Father's, shall work for Me as I have wrought for God.

This day we are called to eat His flesh and to drink His blood. Let us not vex our minds and grieve His Spirit by curiously and profanely inquiring how these things can be; but let us believe that they shall be, because He hath said it.

With the sign He will give the thing signified. He has been faithful to all His saints in every age who have trusted in Him for various blessings, according to the amount of their knowledge of His purpose. He will be faithful to us, and our blessing shall be according to the mighty unfolding of His purpose which He hath vouchsafed to us. Only this day, of all days, let us not come for ourselves alone. Let us approach the King of Saints in the Communion as in the commemoration of All Saints, loving all the brethren, desiring the common perfection and consummated happiness, according to their measure, of all who have served God from the beginning of the world until now, and yielding ourselves without reserve unto the Lord to be fellow-labourers with Him (at, indeed, an immeasurable distance, and because of His infinite condescension) in working out the same, in bringing to pass what we hope for.

We are surrounded with a cloud of witnesses. They all testify unto us with one voice that God did not fail them. What He called them unto He enabled them to perform. They trusted in Him and were delivered. They were heard in the day of trouble for *His* sake who was "heard in that He feared." Let us hearken to the testimony of the many witnesses, that we may be able to add ours to theirs; and that we may begin the song in which they shall join us, the song of thanksgiving to God, who is true, and to Jesus Christ, who is the Faithful Witness.

Let us know the day of our visitation, and do the work of that day. We are not alone. We are members of Him who prevailed. He worketh in us to will and to do in behalf of God's good will and pleasure, because He hath zeal for God, that *that* which God hath willed should be finished. Therefore He worketh in us that we may do our part, and that God's purpose fail not.

[Here was introduced an exhortation to the Church to be filled with joy because of the glorious appearing mentioned in the gospel; and because of holy myriads of angels who come

with the Lord. They who saw His creation at the first, who announced His coming incarnation to the sacred vessel, the woman who should bear the promised seed, and the incarnation become fact to the shepherds, who saw Him in His infancy, in His temptation, in His agony, in His resurrection and ascension, who struck the chain from His first apostle, who cheered the imprisonment of the beloved disciple, who stood by Paul in his shipwreck, and have encamped round all the saints from the beginning, they come to perform the last service, as the *Liturgic Spirits*, for the heirs of salvation. They shall see the body gathered to the Head. Let us rejoice in what shall soon appear, the Lord in His glory, and all His holy angels, and His saints for whom He descendeth from Heaven. Your prayer shall bring Him down and His saints up to meet Him. Your prayer shall open the portals of Heaven and the gates of the grave].

Blessed be the Lord our God, who hath chosen us to this honour. To His name, even the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God, be glory for ever. Amen.

## LXXXIII.

### ALL SAINTS' DAY

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I THESS. iv. 16 to v.

THE second great event in the progress to accomplishment of God's purpose of redemption is the subject of the holy celebration of this day. The first event was the perfecting of the Head of the Church, the second is the perfecting of His body. One saint, and one alone, is perfected, even the King of Saints Himself. He waits to receive those whom the resurrection of the just and the glorious change of the godly who shall be alive in that day shall yield unto Him. The saints when perfected shall receive the Kingdom prepared for them. The whole creation longs for their rule to begin.

When God had finished the rest of His beautiful creation He crowned His work by creating man to rule over and bless what He had made; and man when created was not perfect till an helpmeet for him was found, and to Adam was added Eve, taken from his substance by the hand of God.

Man and woman were set in the garden of delights at the head of the creation which the Lord had pronounced "very good." The creation appeared first, then the rulers of it. When the creation was marred by the sin of those set over it the order of accomplishing God's will was reversed. Then, before the new heavens and the new earth should be manifested, those were prepared into whose hands they could be entrusted. First the dominion was created, then the ruler; now the Ruler is brought forth first and the Kingdom follows. God will not again subject His creation to those who shall fail in His hands. He reserveth for His works a glorious liberty under the rule of Him whose service is perfect free-

dom, in the day of the "manifestation of the sons of God." God who gives the blessing, the saints who shall dispense it, the whole creation which shall receive it, desire together the coming of that day.

A double intercession is made for the saints, one in Heaven, one upon the earth. The Son of God intercedeth in Heaven, the Holy Ghost intercedeth upon the earth. He who sheweth in Heaven in His own person the true sanctification, pleadeth for all who shall be partakers of the same. By Him and in Him our human nature has become an instrument fitted to serve and to glorify God, and has been consecrated to Him and accepted by Him for evermore.

The work of glorifying the creature has been finished in the person of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, exalted to the right hand of God. The many sons who are following Him unto glory must be conformed to His image. He will change their vile bodies and make them "like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." One only is holy *now*, but many shall be brought to the participation and likeness of His holiness. The work of sanctification is begun; it is finished in one, and shall be accomplished in all in due time. For this accomplishment He intercedeth; He who justifieth us also maketh intercession for us. He who was raised, and after resurrection set at the right hand of God, intercedes for the resurrection of all saints and for their location in order in the heavenly places, according to the rank and honour assigned to each. The holy ones who served God in their day and generation according to the light vouchsafed to them from the beginning of the world, whenever they have lived and wherever, are remembered by Him. His intercession will cause that they shall all stand in their lot in the last day. Christ has died; yea, rather He has risen; He also is at God's right hand; He also maketh intercession for us.

He who in Heaven sheweth the work of redemption ac-

complished, He intercedeth in Heaven. He who is on earth, who sanctifieth the elect people of God from the place of His labour, maketh intercession for the saints with groanings which cannot be uttered. He who searcheth the hearts knoweth what the Spirit meaneth, what He would speak from those hearts if perfect utterance were allowed Him. The Spirit carrieth to completion the work which the Son sheweth in Heaven as finished, and He intercedeth for those in whom He worketh. He undertaketh, so to speak, that they shall be perfected, and He prayeth that they may be spared, that they may be borne with, till His work on their behalf, which He worketh in them, be finished. He *engageth* that the saints who are still in the midst of their conflict shall be conformed unto Him who hath entered into His rest. He who is perfected intercedeth before God, who has acknowledged and crowned His perfection. He who hath come down from the Perfected One, who buildeth up His body and maketh every member to partake of the fulness that is in the Head, He intercedeth before God, who knoweth and approveth of His work, "because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Blessed are they who are waiting upon God for His answer to the double intercession which cometh up before Him from Heaven and from the earth, who are hasting unto the end, who are not counting that they have attained till the goal itself be reached, till they be seen of God, not having their own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God in Jesus Christ, and who are yielding themselves unto Him who hath come to them from God and from Jesus Christ, to sanctify them wholly, body, soul, and spirit, to make them to be without spot or wrinkle, "to be holy and without blemish."

He who gained the victory, and the Spirit by whom He overcame, intercede together. They who have learnt from God concerning the victory to be won, and concerning the power which worketh in us, have also laid upon them the duty of making intercession.

They who first receive the light are bound to appear before God in behalf of those not so highly favoured or so soon favoured as themselves. The apostles, to whom the Lord entrusteth the knowledge of God's purpose, are bound to intercede on behalf of those to whom they are sent. Those to whom Christ's ambassadors have come, and who have received from the same the truth and grace of God, are bound to intercede for those who are yet ignorant of what *they* have learned, unacquainted with that which *they* have experienced. The Church, escaping from confusion, intercedes for those still oppressed by the evils from which *they* are obtaining deliverance. The Church which can stand before the altar intercedes for them who are beneath it, who cry, "Lord, how long wilt thou not avenge our blood?" The Christian Church being filled with Christ's Spirit, intercedes for the ancient people of God, that the day of their blindness and captivity may be ended. The chosen nation restored, whose restoration shall be to the whole world as life from the dead, intercedes for all the nations of the earth.

The cry of the saved Church, and of the nations which walk in her light, will ascend unto God without doubt in behalf of the creation which man's sin bound in misery, which man's salvation shall unchain. Deliverance is God's gift, which every one who has received diffuses and dispenses as he can, and certainly and effectually by his intercession, to those who lie beyond him, till all are blessed together, and "all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God."



## LXXXIV.

### SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT.

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*Ep.*—JER. xxiii. 5.    *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN. vi. 5.

THE two facts in the portions of Holy Scripture just read are the miraculous feeding of the multitude in the wilderness and the final settlement of the people of God in the promised land.

On the last Lord's-day of the ecclesiastical year we are instructed concerning the things with which at all times, and especially in the last period of time, the mind of the Church should be occupied. We are called upon to appreciate what we have, and to anticipate joyfully what we hope soon to behold. By His incarnation and death the Lord has obtained for us two gifts, one of which He has already bestowed, the other He has yet to give. A hearty reception by us of the first gift prepares us for the enjoyment of the second. When the Lord comes we should be glad that His eye resting upon us should behold two things written upon our heart by His own hand, the desire that His Spirit should have liberty and that His Kingdom should appear. We would be found of Him celebrating indeed the Eucharist which He ordained, partaking of the mystic supper, establishing ourselves in the peace of God by the remembrance of His death, entering into communion with God by the power of His resurrection life, laying hold by hope of the Kingdom of God, of which we have already received the firstfruits; looking behind us and giving God thanks for what we behold, the Incarnate One crucified for our sins that we might by His death be reconciled unto God; looking above us and beholding Him that was crucified in the highest Heavens at

the right hand of God making continual intercession before God on our behalf, and sending down unto us His own Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, to conform us to His own likeness and lead us into His own worship and service of His Father and our Father, His God and our God; looking before us unto the Kingdom which the Cross purchased and for which the Spirit prepares, "the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in Heaven for those who are kept by the power of God unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." A portion *incorruptible*, whose inward life and force shall never be abated; *undefiled*, whose outward purity shall never be stained; *that fadeth not away*, whose beauty shall never wither nor decay.

The Church in Heaven recites the blessedness of memory and of hope and of present fruition when "they sing the new song, Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." What were we? Sinners redeemed unto God by the blood of His Son. What are we now? Kings and priests unto *our* God, even now learning to rule for Him and to worship Him. What shall we be? Possessors of the Kingdom. "We shall reign upon the earth," heirs of God, joint heirs with Him whose right it is to reign, to whom belongeth the inheritance. The new song of the Church in Heaven is learned by those who give liberty to the Comforter to bear His full testimony concerning Christ's death and resurrection and return in glory. Those to whom the Eucharist teaches its triple lesson, they shall sing on Mount Zion and in the Kingdom of God the new song in its fulness.

We seek not in the holy Eucharist a material sensible presence of our Lord, but we find Him in His holy ordinance leading us by His Holy Spirit into the mystery of His love displayed upon the cross, continued in His impartation to us from Heaven of His own flesh and blood which we partake

of, the bread which is broken by His appointment, and of the cup of blessing which is blessed in His name, consummated in His gift of all things in the day of His second appearing.

Now the word applies which the first of the apostles has left on record, "Whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see Him not yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The time is not yet, but soon shall be, when that word shall be fulfilled, "we shall see Him as He is." "Now we see through a glass darkly." We hope for the day "when we shall see face to face," when "we shall know even as also we are known." Now the Heavens have received Him, soon shall He descend from Heaven with a "shout, with the voice of the Archangel, with the trump of God." Now under the veil of earthly things we have communion with Him, soon our eyes shall behold Him. "Let every one that hath this hope purify himself as He is pure." To those, and those only, whose "conversation is in Heaven" doth it appertain to expect the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ to change their vile body into the likeness of His own glorious body.

Long hath the Great Shepherd been feeding His flock in the wilderness. Soon will He gather them all into the one fold of everlasting rest. Let us follow Him unto the end through the wilderness, that when He appears we may be counted worthy to be called to follow Him still into the Kingdom of God, where, according to their preparation, His saints shall serve Him as kings and priests, and bless and magnify His holy name for ever and ever. Let us follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. First He goeth unto the cross to make atonement for our sins. Let us follow Him thither that we may be relieved of our grievous burdens. Next He ascendeth unto God's throne in Heaven, which now and for ever is beheld as the throne of God and of the Lamb, that from beneath that throne may flow forth unto us the river of life. Let us follow Him thither and wait before

Him for the fulness of the grace of God. Thirdly, He goeth unto the city which hath foundations whose maker and builder is God, where God hath His tabernacle with men. Let us follow Him thither that we may behold the exceeding great reward which God hath prepared for the righteous man, for the last Adam, and for those, the faithful of all generations, the mystic Eve, who witnessed concerning Him the Son of Man, the Virgin's son, "Lo, this is the name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness."

The Lord enable His Church to glory in His cross, to be satisfied with His Spirit, to enter abundantly into His Kingdom, that the Church in the fulness of her blessedness and from the fulness of her thankfulness may never cease to cry aloud, Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, now, henceforth, and for evermore ! Amen.

## LXXXV

### SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT.

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*Ep.*—JER. xxiii. 5. *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN vi. 5.

THE portion for the epistle contains the hope of the Kingdom, of the deliverance of Israel to possess it, and the description of the King, a triple description: 1st, the *Branch* raised up to David; 2nd, the righteous King; 3rd, the Lord our righteousness. In the prophecy we have literally the restoration of the literal Israel from all countries where they have been scattered, and antotypically the resurrection and translation of the spiritual Israel from all parts of the world, and from all periods of time. The three names applied to Messiah in the prophecy contain the whole truth: 1st, the Branch, the Man of the seed of David; 2nd, the Righteous King attaining to dominion by His righteousness; 3rd, making His Church and nation righteous also. First, He was born into the world and wrought righteousness in it, for which He was rewarded by being raised to the right hand of God as King elect, and before He manifests His Kingdom from that place where He waits for it, He works as the Lord the Righteous One, raising up the righteous seed upon the earth, preparing them for His Kingdom. The first epistle of the year presses the Hope, and the last one closes with it, the coming of the King, the gathering of His people, the glory of His reign. The last epistle of the year tells the Church that she has not attained, and presses her onward still to meet her King coming to reign upon the earth. No perfection till all Israel be gathered, and their King be seen at the head of them. Then Heaven and Earth shall rejoice

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together, the Head of the Church and the Church shall see eye to eye, the Shepherd and all His flock shall be together.

Until then the gospel sets forth the "miraculous feeding," forty years feeding upon manna between the Red Sea and Canaan. This typifies two things: first, Christ feeding us with the bread from Heaven, His flesh and blood; secondly, God's providential support of those who follow Christ into the wilderness; both of them are guaranteed to faith until the hope be realised. Heavenly support and earthly food and raiment, and at the end a New Heaven and a New Earth to reign over and enjoy. To feed the multitude He took what men had to give Him, and blessed it, and gave it back to them for distribution. He took our flesh and blessed it, and gives it back to us His holy flesh; He accepts our offerings of what we have and blesses them, and makes them instrumental in effecting the mightiest purposes of God. He taught His poor weak disciples then how He could feed multitudes by them, how He could dispose them to sit in meekness and humility and order before them, waiting for their supplies conveyed from Him.

The Lord introduced the teaching concerning the mysterious feeding on His flesh and blood by this miracle, and He taught through this miracle how He would feed the Church for ever with His flesh and blood; how He would send to men by the hands of their brethren the bread which He blessed. The multitude were fed by Him indeed, but not without the instrumentality and intervention of His ministers. Christ Jesus is with His ministers still, and if the people would hear them and obey Him of whom they testify, they would verily be fed, there would be enough and to spare. There is spiritual leanness and temporal distress because the multitude is not subordinated to Christ, waiting for supplies by His ministers. Men are striving to feed themselves. The ministers, instead of bringing to Christ what they have that He may work by them, that He may make them effectual to supply the wants of the people, are

sending to the places round about to buy bread, striving to cheat men out of their spiritual hunger (satisfy it they cannot) by entertainment of their reason, imagination, and feelings, by supplies from the schools of philosophy, and poetry, and eloquence. The Church is not seen distributing the alms of mercy and kindness in the grace of Christ to the poor, but scanty means are doled out under cruel and insulting conditions by hard-hearted agencies.

Christ would be seen feeding with bread of Heaven and of earth the poor of the earth, filling His priests with His own fulness, out of which to supply the people, disposing His Church to abound in charity and mercy, to fill the hands of His deacons with offerings for the poor and destitute. They that trust in Him shall not want any good thing. To those who hunger and thirst after righteousness is the promise that they shall be filled; to those that seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, that they shall have food and raiment. Christ promises not to minister to our sins, nor to the wants which our sins create; but to our wants incurred while we serve God He has promised to minister. Therefore He says to us, Be without care, without care for the present, full of hope and joy for the future, living by Christ, now reigning with Him for ever.

## LXXXVI.

### SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT.

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*Ep.*—JER. xxiii. 5.    *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN vi. 5.

ON this last Sunday of the ecclesiastical year the portions of Holy Scripture selected for the epistle and gospel do shew the double attitude in which the Church should be seen in the last day of her time history, rejoicing in her present grace, hoping for her coming glory.

The Lord said to His apostles, in the person of Peter, "Blessed are the servants whom their Master, when He cometh, shall find giving to His household their portion of meat in due season." It may be said also, Blessed are the people who shall be found at the advent of the Lord partaking of the table which He spread for them in the wilderness, before He gave them to see and to possess in its fulness the true land of promise.

They who are feasting in the manner which the Gospel sets forth shall hope up to the measure of the glory which shines out in the prophecy. By the gospel we learn where we now are, by the epistle what we soon shall be. May our last hour before our Lord come find us thus doubly occupied, satisfying ourselves with all that He has given to us up to that day, and out of that satisfaction as from windows of hope, as from an eminence raised above the darkness of the world, looking for and hasting unto the coming of His day; that we be not found as those who are looking for a coming day through discontent with a day already come, but as those who out of deep and true enjoyment are waiting for enjoyment deeper still. How shall they hope for the joys which Christ the Lord shall bring with Him who have not embraced



with thankfulness and appropriated with delight the joys which He sent before Him? Let us prove how He can bless by His Spirit now that we may have within us the worthiest conceptions concerning the manner of His blessing when He shall in His own person be manifested unto us. He said to His disciples when He was upon the earth, "Behold I am with you always, even unto the end of the age; behold I come quickly." The more the Church allows the Lord to fulfil unto her His first word of promise, the more does He kindle within her the hope of the fulfilment of the second. It is not to those from whom He has been absent that the Lord comes, but to those who have known and rejoiced in Him in one form He comes to reveal Himself more fully and with greater glory. "He that eateth my flesh (saith Christ) and drinketh my blood, he dwelleth in me and I in him, and I will raise him up at the last day." The way to be filled with the hope of the resurrection is to partake of that which hath risen and which shall rise; yea, to cling by faith to Him that is risen, and to receive from Him the most abundant measure of His Spirit which can be received according to the condition of the dispensation under which we live.

The gospel presents to our view an organised and waiting people, sitting in quietness at the feet of Jesus, and receiving from Him by the hands of those whom He sends unto them the supplies which they need. It records their testimony concerning Him that He was "that prophet that should come into the world." In the condition, the enjoyment, and the testimony of this multitude miraculously fed in the wilderness, the Church of God is instructed concerning her duty to her Lord to rest in Him, to receive from Him through all His ordinances, and to bear true and full witness concerning Him, to give Him glory for what He hath already wrought, and for what He is even now unto those who trust in Him. If we break the order and disturb the peace of His Church, and refuse or disesteem what He gives

us now by the means of grace which He has appointed, the hope of His advent will gradually withdraw from our souls, and terror at the thoughts of His coming will take its place. But if we prize and delight ourselves in the earnest of God's Kingdom, that Kingdom itself shall soon rise upon our view as a morning without clouds. We shall enter into it with joy unspeakable. God has called us to this, and set us for it. In these last days He has appointed a people to be occupied with the hope of His Church and the preparation for its enjoyment. The things which have been forgotten He bringeth to mind again, the blessedness now by the full possession of His Spirit, the blessedness soon to be revealed in the full possession of His Kingdom. May He enable us to abide unto the end, trusting in Him and hoping for His salvation. The world which receiveth not His Spirit cannot take pleasure in those who do. But if the world prevail to rob us of the Comforter, what shall it give us in His place? If one or other is to be parted with, let the world which now lieth in the evil one, and with him is reserved for the lake of fire in the day of the fierce judgment of the Almighty and most Holy God be parted with; and let Him be retained who is to us the hope, and the earnest and the preparation for the glory soon to be revealed, for the Kingdom in which righteousness, and only righteousness, shall dwell for ever, in the blessed condition wherein Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely. Judah, within whose borders are the temple of God and the palace of God's anointed King, shall have its mountain defences, its rocky fortresses, cleared from all enemies and secured against all invasion.

Nothing shall disturb the worship of God, nothing shall withstand His righteous rule; the centre of religion and government shall be safe as surrounded by a wall of fire. And then, God's honour being secured, all Israel shall dwell safely; "peace on earth" shall follow "glory in the highest."

We have a Heavenly constitution, let us honour it and abide in it, and unto us, being in it, the Heavenly Kingdom

soon shall come. For the Heavenly constitution is the Heavenly Kingdom in a mystery. One is changed into the other in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when God's trumpet shall be blown and His voice shall be heard announcing and commanding the wondrous change. It shall be sudden as the transfiguration of Jesus on the Holy Mount, as His glorious resurrection from the dead. May God enable us to long for this change of raiment, to live as those who hope soon to see this mortal changed into immortality, this corruptible putting on incorruption, in the day when death shall be swallowed up in victory. Soon shall every one, in every age, who has "eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of the Son of Man," and since that day has been abiding in Him of whom he has partaken, feel in his vile body the promise fulfilled, "I will raise him up at the last day." Let us long for the meeting with our brethren. Hasting the coming of the day which shall crown them with us, let us cry from our hearts, responding to the Spirit who hath first lifted up the prayer, in which the Bride of the Lamb must follow Him, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Amen.

## LXXXVII.

### SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT.

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*Ep.*—JER. xxiii. 5.    *Gosp.*—ST. JOHN vi. 5.

OUR blessed communion, our glorious hope, these are the subjects of the epistle and gospel for this day, this last Lord's-day of the Christian year.

The Church at the end of her wanderings in the wilderness remembers with gratitude the manna by which generation after generation has been sustained, and anticipates joyfully the land of promise for which the bread of Heaven prepared. The faith by which we live is in the gospel; the hope that saves is in the portion assigned for the epistle. The more we live by faith the more shall we rejoice in hope. Participation of the body and blood of Christ constrains the faithful communicants to cry aloud for the manifestation in glory of the Lord Himself. Let us hold fast that whereunto we have attained, that an abundant entrance may be ministered unto us into the blessedness which remaineth. The service of the Eucharist or Holy Communion fixes our thoughts on the threefold truth concerning our Lord, with which our hearts should be filled: His death for the removal of the curse from us; His life at God's right hand, whereby we are made partakers of God's blessing; His coming again to lead the blessed of His Father into the Kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world.

The first holy use of the Eucharist Service is to "shew forth the Lord's death till He come." The Lord did not accomplish His death in the mystic supper, but He "shewed it forth." We do not put Christ to death when we consecrate the bread and wine at God's altar, but we keep the

memorial of His death which He Himself did institute and charge us to observe. Christ was not literally dead when He used the words, "This is my body broken for you;" "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." He was not actually slain in the institution at the first; He is not actually slain in the continual celebration ever since.

Christ was raised from the dead to die no more; "Death hath no more dominion over Him," "for in that He died He died unto sin once; in that He liveth He liveth unto God."

Christ's actual dead body was not in His own holy hands on the day of institution. His actual dead body is not in the hands of His Church, but the Divinely instituted memorial of His death was in His hands and is still in ours. The Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is God's provision for causing the death of Christ to be remembered. They who honour and use aright the Divine institution are made to remember by God's own action in their spirit and mind that Christ died. His body broken, His blood shed become to them a reality. God's love and the proof of His love are presented to their minds, are borne in upon their spirits, are shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Men have tried in many ways to impress and affect themselves with the fact of the Lord's death, and of the love of which it was the expression. The wax, the canvas, the marble, the eloquent speech and glowing picture have been used. Man's helps to memory have for the most part grieved the Spirit of Truth; the memorial appointed of God rightly used has never failed. While we do what was appointed in remembrance of Christ, God provides by His grace that Christ shall be remembered, and they who remember His death forget their guilt and their fear which hath bondage, and draw nigh unto God with confidence, crying out in their heart, "Behold how He hath loved us."

To those who use His holy institution aright God gives to

remember Him that died. He also giveth unto them to have communion with Him who was once dead but now liveth, to know Him indeed as the Bread of Life which cometh down from Heaven. How shall we know Him to be the Bread of Life? said His perplexed disciples. He replied to their doubts by referring to His ascension; "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" He came down from Heaven the Son of God; He returns to Heaven no less, but He is also Son of Man. He is the perfected man, and from the right hand of God He will beget men in His image. After His ascension you shall know what He meant when He called Himself the Bread of Life. His death has given us a right to live; His ascension shews us the manner of life which is given to those who exercise that right. Men become like that which they live upon. God shews us Christ at His right hand that we may know *that* whereunto we are to be made like, and that we may become like unto Him we must live upon Him. The holy supper seems to say to us, Ye children of men, look upon Christ crucified that ye may see the depth of your humiliation and its removal; look at the crucified One become the glorified quickening Spirit, that ye may know your wondrous dignity and how it is assured unto you. Christ answered the difficulties which were raised in the breasts of His disciples by His words recorded in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John by referring to His ascension, and by referring to the Holy Ghost, whom after His ascension He should send. You will know the bread which is prepared for you when you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before. Ye shall know how to partake of that bread from the Spirit that quickeneth, by whom ye shall be partakers of Christ, and by whom ye shall grow up into His likeness. And when the Lord comes we shall know the meaning of all, and fully understand the words of the Prophet, "This is the name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." And now the time is come when

He who drew all unto Christ who have come unto Him is producing in them the strong desire to draw Christ unto them. The Church on the very boundary line of time looks back upon all the blessings which have come to generation after generation, and longs to behold Him from whom they have all proceeded, for whose sake and by whose mediation God has bestowed them all. The Church looks back with the heart of gratitude and forward with the eye of hope; forward to the day when, instead of the pastors who have destroyed and scattered the flock of God, shall be seen the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep, the great Shepherd whom God brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant; the Lord who shall execute judgment and justice in the earth, in whose days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely; the righteous Branch raised up unto David, the King who shall reign and prosper, the Lord our righteousness.

Let us who live be a voice unto those who are departed and who rest in hope. Let us be a voice unto the whole suffering creation of God, which waiteth for the reign of righteousness. Let us give expression to the sure word of God's promise, which remaineth unfulfilled till it be heard by God not only as His own word, but as His word found and eaten by man, and returning to Him the expression of man's faith, and hope, and love.

The Spirit hath uttered the cry, may the voice of the Bride soon be added to complete the invocation, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Amen.

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